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SATURDAY

23 DECEMBER 1995

# INDEPENDENT

No 2,865

50p  
(Republic of Ireland 65p)



Seeking perfection: Boys from Westminster Cathedral choir school, who are aged up to 13, rehearsing in central London yesterday for Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve and carol services on Christmas Day. Photograph: Geraint Lewis

Rebels want to reintroduce adultery clause in attempt to wreck Lord Chancellor's 'no fault' reforms

## Peers plot to sink divorce Bill

PATRICIA WYNN DAVIES  
Political Correspondent

The Government is facing a barrage of wrecking amendments – including one which would restore adultery as grounds for divorce – to the controversial Family Law Bill when it enters its Lords committee stage next month.

The moves will revive fears that up to 50 religious peers, mostly Conservatives, could be mobilised in a campaign to swing public and political opinion against key aspects of the measure.

If the amendments carry the day, they are likely to form the basis of an onslaught on the Bill by dissident Tory MPs when it reaches the Commons later in the year, and could expose serious divisions on the Conservative benches.

The fervent anti-divorce Tory peer Baroness Young, a former minister and former Conservative Party vice-chairwoman, has tabled amendments which would reintroduce the grounds of adultery and unreasonable behaviour that the Bill seeks to remove from the present law.

Another amendment seeks to sweep away a second significant plank of the Bill by doubling from one year to two the period of "reflection and consideration" during which couples, using mediation procedures if possible, would be expected to resolve differences over the finances of children.

A further amendment by Lady Young aims to retain the five-year bar on divorce where one spouse withholds their consent.

Amendments put down by the crossbencher Lord Simon of Glaisdale, the former law lord, are, if anything, even more restrictive. One seeks to bar divorce where there is a child under 16, or where a court considers it would not be in the interests of children under 16.

Despite the determined revolt expected among some Tory MPs as well as peers, the measure still stands a reasonable chance of becoming law. The government indicated it will be taken on a free vote but most Opposition MPs and peers are likely to support it.

It is likely, nevertheless, to cause fierce controversy within the Conservative Party, which will be especially unwelcome to John Major in the last full session before the general election.

The Bill, salvaged by Lord Mackay of Clashfern, the Lord Chancellor, after efforts by some of his Government colleagues to defer it because of its controversial nature, is bound to be high profile – not least because it could now coincide with the increasingly expected divorce between the Prince and Princess of Wales.

Under the present law, the royal couple could get a divorce within three months on the grounds that they have lived apart for more than two years. But once it is law, the Bill would require the couple to wait a year before finalising a divorce. The law is, however, unlikely to be fully implemented for about two years.

Lord Simon, a former Tory

minister who is vehemently against divorce, has also suggested "affirmation of marriage" clauses to allow spouses to enter into legally binding agreements declaring their marriages indissoluble except by death, or except by death so long as there are children under the age of 16.

Although not all the amendments will be pressed to a vote during the committee stage, scheduled for 11, 18 and 23 January, opponents plan vociferous opposition in an attempt to influence opinion before the Bill transfers to the Commons later next year.

The Liberal Democrat peer Earl Russell has tabled an amendment to delete one of Lord Mackay's concessions to

Tory backbenchers, whose protests stopped the earlier Family Homes and Domestic Violence Bill from reaching the statute book in the last session. The clause would insist that when considering making occupation orders in favour of a co-habiting or former cohabitants, it must take into account the fact that the parties have "not given each other the commitment involved in marriage."

Lord Russell opposes also a clause in the Bill giving the Lord Chancellor the power to require divorcing couples' lawyers to urge the possibility of reconciliation and give advice on mediation and counselling services, and a clause giving courts the power to direct warring couples to attend mediation sessions.

## JUMBO CROSSWORD

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**Weekend page 20**

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for token and entry form

## Outrage as Welsh opera loses bid for lottery cash

JOHN MCROE

Plans for a Welsh National Opera house on the scale of the Sydney Opera were at serious risk after the Millennium Commission yesterday failed to give a grant for the building.

The Heritage Secretary, Virginia Bottomley, yesterday announced that the latest round of Commission grants funded by the National Lottery would not include money for the £86m Cardiff Bay Opera House.

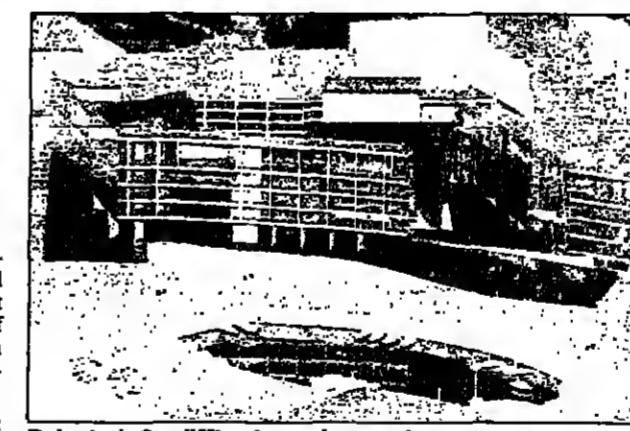
MPS and Opera Board trustees reacted angrily, blaming an anti-Wales bias, a separate bid for money for a new national rugby stadium and the

controversial modernist design. Lord Crickhowell, chairman of the Cardiff Bay Opera House Trust, was "flabbergasted by the decision" and accused the Millennium Commission of pro-London bias. The Trust had asked for £2.7m to help with building work through to 1997. Plans for the house to open on 1 March 2000 were last night off.

An application to redevelop Cardiff Arms Park in time for the 1999 Rugby World Cup, to be hosted by Wales, will be considered in time for the commission's next round of grants in February. For the past year, the bids for rugby and opera

were thought to be "competing for the soul of Wales". Glanmor Griffiths, honorary treasurer of the Welsh Rugby Union, refused to gloat. "We have never criticised the Opera House and we are only concerned with our bid," Rhodri Morgan, Labour's spokesman for Welsh Affairs, was one of the few not surprised by yesterday's Commission grants. "If it came to a choice between the rugby stadium and the opera house, then the stadium would come first." The Welsh Secretary of State [William Hague] is a Meat Loaf fan and if you have a Meat Loaf fan as secretary, it's unsurprising," he said.

The Iraqi architect last night said she was "very disappointed" by the Committee's decision but thought her design was not the reason for the lack of funding. "Maybe I'm being naive, but I don't take it personally." The commission's deputy chief executive, Heather



Rejected: Cardiff's planned opera house

Wilkinson, said: "To suggest we're running scared of modern architecture is quite wrong. We turned it down because the project wasn't ready." The Heritage Secretary, Virginia Bottomley, said that more Millennium Commissioners had seen the Opera House than anything else and said the rejection of the application was to do with risks over "finance, construction and design". She pointed to the £14.5m grant for a Llanelli Coast Park announced yesterday, and added that 10 per cent of the Millennium Commission funds of £336m had gone to Wales.

£21m for Kew, page 5

We were going to call it Bishops Finger. But, ooh, yes we did didn't we?



THE SERIOUS BEER WITH THE SILLY NAME.

### IN BRIEF

#### Knives crackdown call

Labour demanded a crackdown on advertisements for mail order knives, some with 10in blades and known by names such as Rambo Sidearm and Rambo Shortword. Page 2

New curbs on catches by Britain's fishing fleet will take effect from next month after agreement in Brussels to cut quotas in an attempt to preserve stocks. Page 4

#### Man has CJD

An ex-abattoir worker has been diagnosed as having Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease. Page 6

Turkey goes to polls

Turkish voters face a leap into the unknown in tomorrow's general election. Page 10

Today's weather

Mild in the South. Colder in the North, with showery rain that will spread south. Page 2

#### Kew awarded £21m

The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, received a £21m grant from the Millennium Fund to protect world flora. Page 5

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## Holiday price war for Christmas

PAUL RODGERS and  
IAN MACKINNON

Britain's Christmas festivities got under way yesterday with long traffic jams, almost half a million people flying out to sun and holiday companies launching a price war.

Thomas Cook announced discounts of up to 15 per cent on package tours a day after Lunn Poly revealed a pay-by-instalment plan for holidaymakers. Other companies are expected to follow as the Christmas-New Year selling season swings into full gear on Boxing Day. The latest cuts are partly offset by recent increases by tour

operators of 6 to 9 per cent.

At the same time as announcing its price cuts, Thomas Cook revealed that the running battle it has been fighting with Thomson, Britain's largest tour operator and owner of Lunn Poly, is close to resolution.

But for the Christmas holidaymakers untroubled by discounts and price wars, yesterday was the day when 500,000 of them passed through Britain's airports. Choirs and musical groups entertained passengers at Gatwick, which handled 65,000 passengers; by 2 January 700,000 travellers will have gone through the airport. But there was less joy on the

roads as traffic built up on main routes and an accident on the M1 caused a 10-mile tailback. On the A2 near the junction of the M25 in Kent another accident led to long tailbacks.

Among those fleeing Britain for the festive period, the most popular destinations from Heathrow are Paris, Amsterdam and New York; for Gatwick it is Tenerife, Spain, Florida and Australia. For skiers, the slopes of Switzerland, Austria and France are in demand.

Heathrow airport will handle 800,000 passengers over the Christmas period, while Stansted will play host to 100,000 and Luton to 50,000, a 40 per cent

increase on last year. British Airways will take 250,000 people away over the festive period and is operating 35 flights on Christmas Day. Other passengers will get a traditional Christmas meal and will be able to see the Queen's Christmas message.

On the road, motorists were having to contend with accidents, heavy spray and, in places, flooding. "It seems as if many people have taken the afternoon off and roads have been really busy since about 2pm," said an AA Roadwatch spokeswoman. "It's really busy and it's probably going to get worse."

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IN BRIEF

news

# Everyone's favourite ingredient: a deer for Christmas



Dinner date: Many of the red deer roaming the rolling hillsides around Brecon Court deer farm, in Gwent, are destined for festive feasts this Christmas

Photograph: Rob Stratton

TONY HEATH.

Venison, the flesh of deer, is becoming Britain's fashionable meat. With the lean, dark meat finding its way on to more and more dinner tables - especially around Christmas time - farming deer is now becoming an attractive enterprise for farmers once sceptical of anything other than beef.

Desmond McElney, who runs a herd of 600 on 180 acres of rolling South Wales countryside, said: "The taste for venison has been building up quickly in recent years." He

added that no one was denigrating beef, "but people are now becoming more aware of the fact that farmed venison is an alternative". The traditional suspicion of a food once held to be more Scottish than English is fading as Britons embrace healthier eating habits. Venison's fat content is 6.4 per cent against pork's 26 per cent. Its cholesterol content is about half that of beef.

Earlier this week, several hundred young deer barely six months old were sheltering in barns at Brecon Court deer farm, which Mr McElney took

over in 1988. Before that he worked for 27 years in business before taking early retirement as European finance director of a multinational engineering company. He and his wife, Barbara, now co-run the farming enterprise on the outskirts of the village of Llansoy, in Gwent.

Older animals roam the hillsides behind high fences. The head stockman, Neil Clark, said he was happy with this year's "rutting" - the breeding service performed by the farm's 21 stags. The rutting season, which lasts for two months, ended a few weeks ago. "The

stags lose up to 20 per cent of their body weight during the rut. Come June we will have an increase of 200 in the deer population here," Mr Clark said.

Unlike sheep, deer do not require clipping and do not attract subsidies.

"What the two animals do have in common is an ability to crop grass almost as closely as a lawn mower," Mr McElney said.

The economics of deer farming is uncomplicated by wrangles with the Ministry of Agriculture over cash handouts. Depending on the cut, the meat fetches between £1 and £5

per pound from hotels and restaurants which serve venison on the menu.

However, deer farming in Britain is still small-scale. About 40,000 head are reckoned to be farmed on fewer than 400 holdings, compared with 2 million "behind the wire" in New Zealand.

But the British palate is shedding its inhibition. Reviewing his seven years in farming, Mr McElney said: "There's much more interest in venison now. When I began I didn't know a thing about raising deer, but I learnt."

**Venison with Port and Shallots**

3lb (1.4kg) boned and tied joint  
1½oz (35g) butter  
1tbs sunflower oil  
1 bottle port  
1½lb (600g) shallots  
1 large orange - strips of zest removed  
2tbs plain flour  
salt and freshly ground pepper  
15g thyme (include stalks if fresh)  
2 bay leaves  
2tbs redcurrant jelly

Sauté the shallots in the butter turning until light golden in colour. Remove and set aside with the meat. Stir the flour into the hot butter mixture to make a roux and pour in the port, stirring all the time. Squeeze the orange and add juice to the sauce with the redcurrant jelly, thyme, seasoning and bay leaves. Return meat and shallots to pan and simmer for 1 hour 20 minutes. Half an hour before the end of cooking add fine strips of orange zest to the dish and half the flat leaf parsley. When cooked, cut into slices, pour the sauce over it and scatter the remaining parsley over the dish. Serve with mashed parsnip and potato.

■ Recipe serves six people and is by Victoria Whitchurch, of Victoria Whitchurch Catering, London.

## Tragedy of orphaned boy, 9

JAMES CUSICK

Only two days after attending the funeral of his father, a boy of nine is facing Christmas as an orphan after he found his mother dead in her bedroom.

The double tragedy has shocked the school and family friends of Ben Bradshaw, from Abingdon, Oxfordshire. Described as lively, energetic and polite, he is said to be "lost without his parents".

Police were astonished at the bravery of the boy after he called 999 when he went to his mother's bedroom in the morning and found he could not wake her. Paramedics pronounced Anneke Bradshaw dead at the scene.

Thames Valley Police, who released details of the incident yesterday, said they had recovered tablets from the house.

Ben was alone when he discovered the body of his mother lying collapsed on the bathroom floor. Police said there were no suspicious circumstances connected with her death.

Mrs Bradshaw, 44, a nurse,



Ben Bradshaw: Parents died within days of each other

had taken Ben to the funeral of his father, Bill, a 52-year-old copywriter who had died from cancer.

Although friends said he fought hard against the spreading disease and had refused to go into a hospice full time so that he could spend as much time as possible with his family, pain had forced him to spend his last week in a hospice.

After the funeral, his wife had said both she and Ben wanted to "get back to normal".

David Hastings, a friend of the family who works at Oxford University, said: "It is hard to react other than to be very shocked and sad. Ben took up most of her time - he is a lovely boy, very lively, energetic and always very polite. This is such a tragic way for him to spend Christmas."

Mr Bradshaw's sister, Jean, and her husband Terry, are now looking after Ben at their home in Preston, Lancashire. In an attempt get his life back to normal as soon as possible, he has been enrolled in a primary school in the town where his cousin is a pupil. However, his Abingdon school friends are missing him.

William Ginger, one of Ben's best friends said: "I can't believe what has happened and I'm very sorry for Ben." William has written a letter to his friend saying: "I am sorry about your mum and dad both dying. I feel really sad for you."

William's mother, Julia Ginger, said Ben was always around her home making noise and playing. "The house seems quiet now that he's gone," she said.

Neighbours who knew the Bradshaws well said they felt he was a "sturdy boy" and that he would be alright with his relatives in Lancashire. Mrs Bradshaw's only surviving relative is her sister, who lives in the United States.

Ben's former headteacher, John Fisher, said: "This is a tragic story that has shocked us all."

"The big fear is that other children who have lost a parent will be worried that they may lose the other."

## Jackson set for top of the tree

Michael Jackson looks set to be No 1 in the pop charts for Christmas No 1, say record industry experts.

Jackson's *Earth Song* is expected to hold onto the position at the top of the charts when the new rundown is published tomorrow, despite stiff competition from Mike Flowers' *Wonderwall* - an easy-listening version of the Oasis hit song.

Virgin Our Price made the prediction despite the Flowers single comfortably outselling Jackson in their stores.

Tower Records in Piccadilly Circus, central London, said it was selling three times as many copies of *Wonderwall* but still anticipated a triumph for Jackson.

Head of singles products at Virgin Our Price, Matthew Kreuzer said both records had been selling "incredibly well".

"It's going to be close as to who is No 1 but from what I've heard from the two record companies Michael Jackson is just about ahead and will hang on. Lots of people just go into a record shop in the Christmas week and ask for the No 1 one regardless of what it is. Michael Jackson is the current number one and that will work in his favour."



Jackson: Chart-topper

## Electric rail plans 'shelved'

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR

Transport Correspondent

Nearly all rail electrification schemes have been shelved for the next 10 years and rail replacement programmes have been cut back drastically under investment plans for the privatised railway, Labour claimed today.

An analysis of Railtrack's 10-year investment plan published earlier this week makes no mention of most important electrification schemes.

The only new electrification which Railtrack is planning is the Heathrow Express London Paddington to Heathrow scheme and part of the cross-London Crossrail which has been delayed by parliamentary opposition.

Railtrack's 10-year programme of investing at least £1 billion a year was criticised by opposition politicians for being the minimum necessary to keep the railway going at the same standard.

In particular, Railtrack forecasts that rail replacement rates decline from the average rate of 2.1 per cent annually in the 1980s to 0.8 per cent for the next 10 years. This implies an aver-

age rail life of 125 years, which compares with a European average of 2.7 per cent (an average of 37 years). According to evidence submitted to the Commons transport Committee for its recent report on rail finances, such a low level of replacement is not feasible and will lead to deteriorating conditions for rail passengers.

The electrification schemes shelved include Edinburgh to Glasgow Queen St, Scotland's busiest commuter route, the Midland Main Line from London to Sheffield, the Great Western Reading to Bristol, the west of England and South Wales and Trans-Pennine service from York and Hull to Leeds, Manchester and Liverpool.

Brian Wilson, Labour's transport spokesman, said: "Some of these schemes are crucial to the local and regional economies."

Railtrack said last night: "We have identified certain schemes which are going ahead. But it is not an exclusive list and other schemes may go ahead provided there is a viable commercial case for them."

In the Dover-Dunkirk train ferry service, which has been operating for more than 60 years, will end today.



How do you celebrate the holidays? We hope you'll drop us a line and tell us. Write to the Jack Daniel Distillery, Lynchburg, Tennessee USA.

**ALL OF US HERE AT JACK DANIEL DISTILLERY** in Lynchburg, Tennessee hope you're getting your Christmas decorations put up in plenty of time. (From the look of things, our head ricker Jack Bateman is on his way from the sawmill with a freshly-cut pine wreath.) And we hope that no matter where in the world you're from, your holidays will be filled with family, friends and all the other blessings of the season.



**JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE WHISKEY**

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IES

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## news

**Fishing rights:** Minister says he limited damage for British fleets by winning catch concessions estimated at £30m a year

# Trawlermen all at sea over new EU quotas

KATHERINE BUTLER  
Brussels

New curbs on catches by Britain's fishing fleet will take effect from next month after agreement in Brussels to cut quotas in an effort to protect dwindling fish stocks.

But EU fisheries ministers, who haggled for 20 hours before finally closing a deal at dawn yesterday, succeeded in extracting significant concessions for their national fleets, toning down the most savage of the

proposed cuts. The European Commission had sought catch restrictions of up to 50 per cent for sensitive stocks such as mackerel, plaice, herring and hake.

In Britain's case, the difference between the commission's proposed reduction in quotas and the final outcome of the negotiations is worth over £30m to the industry, the Fisheries Minister, Tony Baldry, claimed.

Emerging from the all-night talks, Mr Baldry said he had managed to trim 10 per cent off

the total of proposed across-the-board cuts. "I achieved my objective of securing the best possible deal for British fishermen consistent with the conservation of stocks for the future."

Asked if he believed the deal would satisfy Euro-sceptics in the Tory party who want Britain to leave the EU fishing regime, Mr Baldry replied: "You tell me what deal would satisfy the Euro-sceptics."

Fishermen were predictably critical of the cuts, which will be

incide with the bitterly contested opening up of fishing grounds west of Britain, the Irish Box, to the Spanish and Portuguese fleets, on 1 January.

They grudgingly admitted that Mr Baldry's efforts had succeeded in softening the blow but complained that new restrictions in the North Sea and western waters would hit British fleets harder than any others.

Barrie Deas, of the National Federation of Fisheries Organisations, said the cuts would force many trawlers to

choose between bankruptcy or cheating on the quotas. John Wilkinson, a Tory Euro-sceptic and one of the leaders of the recent Commons revolt against the Government's fisheries policy, said: "I shall continue to press for British sovereignty over what should be a British resource in British waters. We want a 200-mile limit and to withdraw from the Common Fisheries Policy so that we can manage our own resources."

Several other Tory MPs and many fishermen want to pull

Britain out of the Common Fisheries Policy. But the Government has no intention of doing so. Apart from the diplomatic damage, it would still be to negotiate intensively with the rest of Europe over fish stocks because they migrate in and out of British waters.

The EU's fisheries commissioner, Emma Bonino, accused ministers of lacking the political courage to take the drastic measures required to sustain stocks. "The longer we postpone these measures the more

serious the problem of stocks becomes," she warned.

British fleets face a huge 33 per cent cut in the mackerel quota. Ministers found this part of the deal virtually impossible to unravel as it had been earlier agreed with Norway, which jointly manages migratory species in the North Sea.

British quotas for sole, plaice, hake, and herring were also cut, but UK fishermen will be able to catch more cod, haddock and whiting in 1996 than this year.

Those who fish for valuable species like mackerel and herring

place and sole off eastern England were particularly hard hit.

All in all, Britain's quota next year for the eight main commercial species are 90,000 tonnes lower than this year - a cut of about 14 per cent. The biggest cuts are, however, concentrated on the less valuable types like mackerel and herring.

During the negotiations, Mr Baldry raised the prospect of an eventual phase-out of the quota system, and its replacement by technical conservation measures such as new net designs.

## Curbs make 'rise in fish prices inevitable'

GLENDY COOPER

The bright white lights of Billingsgate fish market shone out at dawn yesterday, but inside the atmosphere was distinctly gloomy.

"It's dreadful," said Cyril Duffy, of Nathan Ltd, who sells the fish most affected - plaice, haddock, cod and sole. "Our prices are bound to go up. And it won't just be us that suffers. The prices will go up for everyone, including the public."

Tony Lynes, chairman-elect of the London Fish Merchants Association, said: "There's going to be a reduced volume and prices will go up. Then the fear is that the public won't buy it because they are not prepared to pay. There is no argument about the fact we need quotas. Our argument is about the way they've gone about it."

"What really upset me this week over the fishing row is that it became a way of scoring political points," he added. "Everyone forgot about the real issue which is how are our fishermen going to earn a living. The fishermen are poor relatives of the farmers. They don't get set-asides or any other of the protections."

Chris Leftwich, chief inspector of the Fishmongers' Company, agreed: "Everyone accepts sensible controls," he said. "But they could organise things better. Discards mean that fisher-

men throw different types of fish back into the sea so they don't go over their quota of landed fish. But the fish are already dead so it's not doing any good."

The main target for their vitriol was not, however, the Government or the EU, but the Spanish and French fishermen, who were widely seen as contravening the guidelines.

"The problem is that the Spanish and French will come into the Irish Box and go for juvenile fish," said Simon Newnes, of CJ Newnes.

"There is a limit to what the customer is prepared to pay"

"There's a big market for small fish in Spain. You'll see them with John Dorys no bigger than four inches. How can stock ever replenish if they take those?"

"The price of fish depends on supply and demand," said Steve Hatt, of Steve Hatt Fishmongers. "Obviously there will be cuts and a tendency to put up prices. It's simple mathematics."

Others were not so pessimistic. Geoffrey Molloy, of the UK Association of Frozen Food Producers, said cod prices were

unlikely to be affected because more than 80 per cent of British cod was imported.

The UK, as the world's cod-eating capital, takes 25 per cent of the total international catch, but only fishes 5 per cent of the species itself.

The housewife won't see

much difference in price

because, over the years, we have become increasingly dependent on imports," Mr Molloy said.

Of the total amount of fresh and frozen fish eaten in the UK, about two-thirds is imported while about 70 per cent of white fish [cod and haddock] is imported, mainly from countries like Canada, Greenland and Iceland."

Other species caught in UK waters which are affected by quotas, such as herring and mackerel, are not particularly popular in Britain and tended to be exported to countries like France and Spain, he said.

John Adams, of the National Federation of Fishmongers, also believed huge price increases were unlikely.

"In the final analysis there is a limit to what the customer is prepared to pay," he said.

"If, for example, cod sells now for £2.50 a pound and the quota is dropped by a half, it does not mean that customers are going to pay £5 a pound. They obviously won't... Customers are very price sensitive."

Market forces: Fish merchants at Billingsgate, London, are increasingly fearful for the future of their industry

Photograph: Glynn Griffiths



## WARNING Important Safety Notice



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habitat

## Margins of error 'whittled away'

The agreement that European Union fisheries ministers reached in the small hours of yesterday was a classic compromise which leaves fish stocks in real danger of collapse.

This is the view of scientists and nature conservationists who deplore the annual bargaining which leads to dangerously high catch quotas in the North Sea and North-east Atlantic.

Many fishermen agree that stocks are depleted but they also feel the scientists are often over-cautious or mistaken. They have no incentive to fish less; that would only harm their earnings.

John Shepherd, a former senior scientist at the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, points out that if they fished less, they could probably catch more after a few years of stock recovery.

Most stocks have been hammered so hard and so long that they are depressed well below the optimum size for commer-

cial exploitation. About 50 to 60 per cent of the total weight of fish in the main commercial species is taken by man each year. The lifespan of the cod is 10 or more years; in the North Sea almost none survives beyond 4.

Yet in Brussels the ministers agreed an increase in cod quotas. This is because scientists have recently detected a small cod baby boom, caused by natural fluctuations. These natural fluctuations can work both ways, however. A sudden fall in baby fish numbers makes the impact of chronic overfishing far worse; hence the need for caution.

It is caution and margins for error that are gradually whittled away during the Common Fisheries Policy's annual process of setting quotas for each nation. Government scientists first

reach agreement on stock sizes and suggest how many fish might be taken. Next, the European Commission recommends to EU members total allowable catches (TACs) — and is tempted not to incur the wrath of governments and fishermen by sharp cuts.

The final act is for EU fish-

eries ministers to agree quotas. They, too, are under strong pressure from fishermen to squeeze up the quotas. EU governments have little scope for demanding a greater share of the quotas for their own fishermen. So they talk up the TACs.

Nicholas Schoon

## INDEPENDENT Special Reports Diary 1996

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Three senior Scottish judges are to consider the case of a coma victim — the first right-to-die case in Scotland — because of the legal issues it raises.

The move, announced yesterday, means a delay in any decision in the case of Janet Johnstone, 52, who doctors say is in a persistent vegetative state with no hope of recovery.

But Lord Cameron of Loch Broom told the Court of Session in Edinburgh yesterday that he would not be issuing a judgment after nearly two-and-a-half days of evidence and legal argument. Instead, he is to make a report which the Inner House of senior judges will consider.

The NHS trust has also asked Scotland's top law officer, the Lord Advocate, to clarify his position on whether a doctor who stops treating a patient would be granted immunity from prosecution for murder or culpable homicide.

Lord Cameron announced

that he would make a report to the Inner House after hearing argument from the Lord Advocate. "It would be inappropriate for me to express an opinion by way of judgment on the factual material and the legal issues raised," he said.

These are novel and raise most important matters of public policy and indeed policy for this court. I can intimate I will be reporting this matter to the Inner House and will do so as soon as may be."

The Lord Advocate, Lord Mackay of Drumadoon, had suggested such a course of action at the beginning of his argument. He said it was not his intention to frustrate the action which the doctors at Law Hospital wanted to take but he had to ensure that it was legally competent. This was only fair to doctors and the patient's relatives. If the court could not grant permission in such a case then it was a matter for Parliament itself.

Lord Mackay said Scotland was now out of step with the situation in England where there was a judgment from the House of Lords in the case of the Hillsborough victim Tony Bland. This was a problem which had to be put right, he said.

مكتبة من الأصل

EU quota

**Millennium landmarks:** Plan to rebuild botanic gardens' seed bank hailed as 'one of most important gifts of our generation'

## Kew given £21m grant to protect world flora

JOHN MCKEE

The £21m of millennium cash awarded by Virginia Bottomley, Secretary of State for National Heritage, to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, will be one of the "most important gifts of our generation", the recipients said yesterday.

The money will go towards a Millennium Seed Bank which will aim to collect, research and conserve seeds from almost all the United Kingdom's flora by 2000.

By 2010 it is hoped the new institution will have ensured the safety of 10 per cent of the world's flora - much of which is on the verge of extinction.

The bank will be built at Wakehurst Place, West Sussex - the site of the gardens' present seed bank - and will open for the public to see the work sorting, selecting and storing seeds. It will concentrate on species in the UK - with local botanists playing a part in seed collection - and on the species of the arid and semi-arid regions of the world.

According to senior environmental sources, in the next 50 years, some 25 per cent of plant species could become extinct.

The director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Professor Sir Ghillean Prance, said yesterday: "The saving of rare seeds and potentially useful wild species of plants is one of the most important gifts our generation could give to the people of the third millennium."

"There is no doubt that species of plants will continue to become extinct in the wild. The design of the new seed bank

will ensure both the safety of the seeds as a world resource and will allow our visitors to learn more about the importance of seeds and their conservation.

"The installation of this vast expansion to our seed bank is one of the greatest and most important challenges ever faced by the Royal Botanic Gardens."

The total cost of the new seed bank is estimated at £58m. The Royal Botanic Gardens has already raised £30m for private funds and is launching a spring campaign for the extra £7m needed.

The gardens' present bank, which has been operating at Wakehurst Place for 23 years, only contains 2 per cent of flowering plant flora.

The Agriculture Minister, Douglas Hogg, said yesterday that the grant fell in line with the spirit of the Biodiversity Convention which John Major signed at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

He added: "The seed bank

will stand as a major contribution by the UK to the conservation of biodiversity at a time of growing international concern about the consequences of genetic erosion.

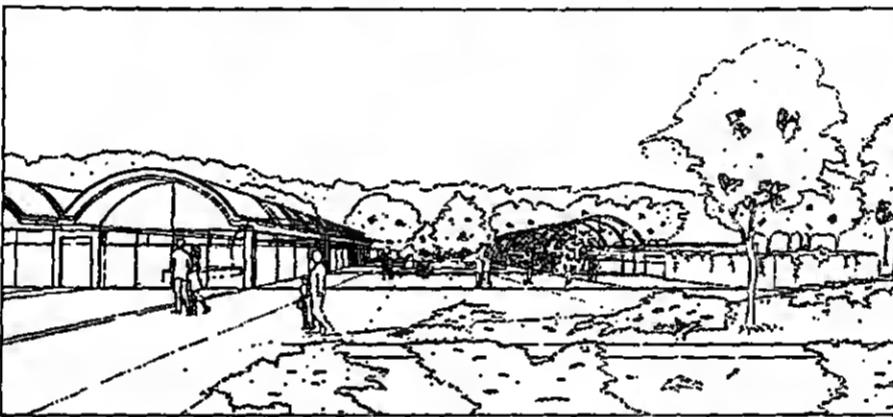
"The Royal Botanic Gardens is acknowledged worldwide as pre-eminent in its field and the seed bank project should build on its reputation as a centre for scientific excellence."

Mrs Bottomley said: "The Millennium Seed Bank, our fifth national landmark, will be of global significance in the third millennium. Our support for this project stands as a major investment in the well-being of the planet and future generations."



Mighty oaks from little acorns grow: It is hoped the Millennium Seed Bank will save species from the UK and abroad

Photograph: Dillon Bryden

Seeds held at Kew include sea knotgrass (above) and *Impatiens gordonii* of the balsam family (below)

An artist's impression of the Millennium Seed Bank at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

## 'Green' schemes given £46m

Virginia Bottomley, the Secretary of State for National Heritage, yesterday announced grants worth £46m from the Millennium Commission to 10 environmental and community projects.

Mrs Bottomley, the commission's chairman, said that the grants were intended to make a significant difference to the quality of life of the British people. The principal recipient is the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, west London, for the Millennium Seed Bank, which

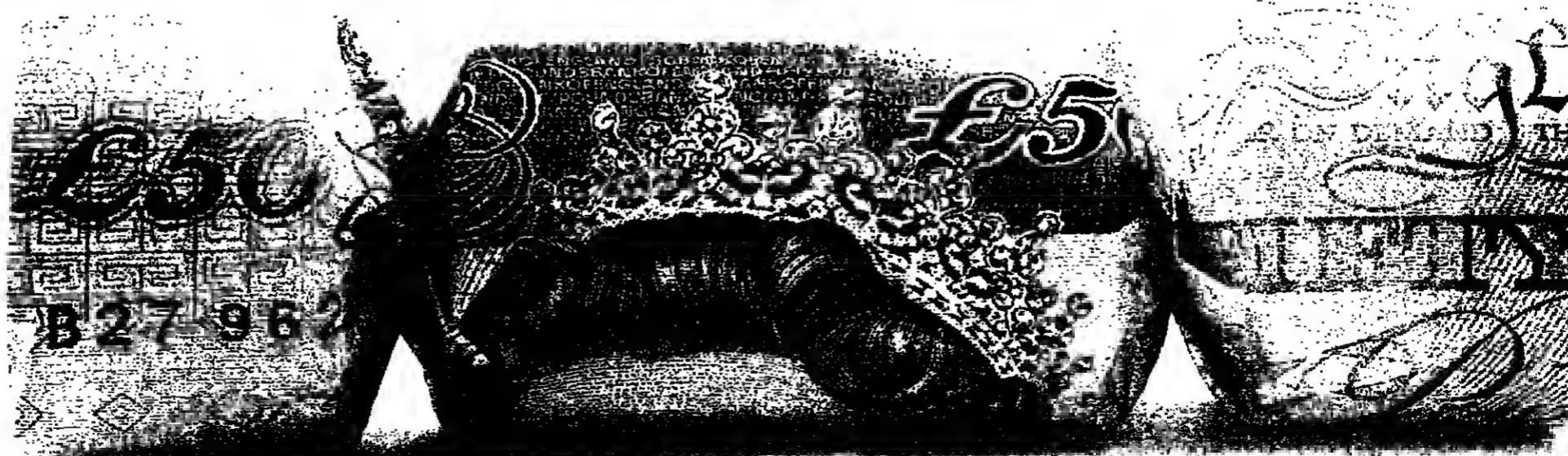
received £21.5m. It becomes the fifth "landmark" project following on from the Tate Gallery, Portsmouth Harbour, an "Earth Centre" at Doncaster, South Yorkshire, and the redevelopment of Hampden Park.

Llanelli Borough Council was awarded £14.5m to extensively restore a valuable stretch of Welsh coastline and create a new coastal park. England's only stretch of magnesium limestone cliffs is to be restored and conserved with the help of £4.5m of Millennium money.

Durham County Council is carrying out £9.5m work on an area which has been damaged by the dumping of waste.

A 60ft observation tower will be the centrepiece of the redevelopment of the WildFowl and Wetlands Trust headquarters at Slimbridge, Gloucestershire. The commission awarded the Trust £2.5m towards the £5.6m project. And a new £3.5m National Wildflower Centre is to be set up in Merseyside with the help of £1.6m funding from the commission.

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## news

**Beef alert:** Ailing victim of Creutzfeld-Jakob Disease may have only a few months to live

# Fears of BSE link with sick abattoir worker

CHARLES ARTHUR  
Science Correspondent

A former abattoir worker is returning home from hospital after being diagnosed as having Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD). The man, who is in his early fifties, will spend Christmas with his family, following tests carried out at York District Hospital.

The case has aroused the interest of the Medical Research Council's CJD Surveillance Unit, based in Edinburgh, which is collating figures to help determine whether it is possible for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), "mad cow disease", to be passed to humans, causing CJD.

However, a doctor at the hospital emphasised that the case is reckoned to be the first in the area since 1985. Statistically, we would have expected two since then," said Dr Ray Marks, executive medical director for the hospital's trust.

The Department of Health also said that the number of

confirmed deaths from CJD to the end of November this year was just 29. This compares with 55 for 1994.

The York man is understood to have been a full-time abattoir worker. Dr Marks said that the man is now showing signs of dementia, and that CJD is "the only diagnosis left". The prognosis is not good: "He probably only has months to live if our diagnosis is correct." The man, who will be readmitted to the hospital after Christmas, was examined earlier this week by Robert Will, head of the Edinburgh surveillance unit.

The past month has seen heightened fears that people who have eaten beef from cows infected with BSE or who have been in contact with infected cattle might be especially at risk of developing CJD.

There is no evidence that this can occur. But a number of scientists have commented on the statistical improbability of six recent cases of CJD in the United Kingdom – four involving dairy farmers, and two involv-

ing teenagers. Analysis by Sheila Gore of the MRC's Biostatistics Unit in Cambridge put the chance of this at 1 in 10,000. She said in November that this "signals an epidemiological alert" which required investigation.

The latest case is thought to be the first involving an abattoir worker. Such people might be at risk if BSE could pass to humans because the disease is especially concentrated in the brain and spinal cord. Although the head is removed in one piece, workers have often used water-cooled circular saws to remove the spine – creating what one scientist calls "a fine haze of grey matter" which might be highly infectious.

However, people who develop the disease often do so after the age of 50, according to research data from a number of countries. And CJD is also found in countries which do not have BSE. In some countries, the disease occurs more frequently than the one per million per year that is the average in the UK.



Brief glory: Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, taking charge of the Duchess of Hamilton yesterday at Loughborough Central station on the Great Central Railway, Britain's only mainline steam railway, accompanied by Geoff Morris, footplate inspector (right)

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## Former spy on arms charge is denied bail

ROBERT BLOCK  
Johannesburg

Paul Grecian, the former British spy, will be spending Christmas in a South African jail after a magistrate yesterday refused him bail on the grounds that he was likely to abscond.

Interpol agents arrested Mr Grecian, 40, when he arrived in Johannesburg for a holiday with his South African fiancée, Elizabeth Powell, eight days ago. He now faces possible extradition to the United States, where he is wanted on charges of fraud, perjury and conspiracy to sell weapons components to Iraq.

US prosecutors from New Jersey asked South Africa to oppose Mr Grecian's application for bail, pending an extradition hearing, and were supported by the court's magistrate, Dion Schetler.

He said the accused's background in espionage made him a significant flight risk. The magistrate said even if Mr Grecian surrendered his passport and agreed to report to police every day, he could still call on



Paul Grecian: Court feared he was likely to abscond

his experience as a spy to help him flee the country, especially with his MI5 connections. The extradition hearing was set for 22 January.

Mr Grecian's barrister, Lawrence Hodges, said he would appeal against the decision at the Supreme Court in Johannesburg on 22 January.

Mr Hodges rejected prosecution claims that his client had huge resources, saying that Mr

Grecian was innocent after his long battle against almost identical charges in Britain. He was finally acquitted last month.

The acquittal by the British Court of Appeal followed admissions by the Government that it condoned Mr Grecian's deals with the Iraqi government in return for information on Baghdad's military capabilities.

Mr Grecian told the court hearing that he had no intention of jumping bail. He said he had never run away from anything in his life and did not want to jeopardise his status in South Africa because of his fiancée.

Mr Schetler said yesterday that Mr Grecian could face a possible 25-year jail sentence if he were convicted on all US charges.

According to the US indictment, Mr Grecian and his firm, Ordnance Technology, had a contract in the late 1980s to supply Iraq with a factory capable of producing 500,000 artillery fuses a year. The indictment accuses him of obtaining fuse components from a New Jersey-based US firm and pretending that the end-user was Jordan.

## Search begins for causes of fatal rig blast

Health and safety experts were yesterday investigating a blast that killed three workmen carrying out tests on an offshore gas rig under construction at a Tyneside engineering yard.

Two of the men died instantly and the third died of his injuries later after they were caught by a sudden rush of gas at the Howdon yard of Amec, one of the North-east's leading offshore companies. Four other men were hurt in the accident, which happened late on Thursday on a gas rig as nitrogen was being used to test piping systems.

The men who died were all close to the point of release and took the full force of the blast.

One of the injured men said: "As far as I know they were taking a flange off when it happened. I was just assisting the riggers when it went up. The next thing I knew I was just wandering around."

About 40 firefighters were called to the yard but there was no blaze and little immediate sign of damage. Station Officer George Arnott said: "It was a strange scene – nothing seemed out of place except there were three casualties lying there seriously injured. Once we started inspecting the site, however, we realised something quite severe had happened."

The incident was a release of gas under pressure rather than an explosion, he said, like bursting a balloon under very high pressure. "It has probably thrown the men back quite

forcibly and at quite a speed." The dead and injured workers were understood to be members of the GMB union, which represents most of the labour force at Amec.

Martin Gannon, a regional union official, said: "Our hearts go out to the families of the victims... A full inquiry will be held by the Health and Safety Executive and we will be asking for all the details and will be fully involved in that inquiry. We will be looking to make sure this sort of tragedy never occurs in the future." One of the union's first aims would be to give all possible help to the families of the victims, he said.

Dennis Scott, operations director at Amec, said: "What has happened has come as a great shock to everyone... Until we get the [Health and Safety Executive] reports I am afraid we cannot say too much more about the incident."

"There could be a number of reasons why it happened and I really would not like to speculate before the completion of the investigation."

Mr Scott added: "Obviously everyone is in deep shock and our deepest sympathies go out to the families and friends of the casualties. As a sign of respect we decided to send everybody home so there will be no work in the yard today. It will be closed until further notice."

The four workers who escaped the main force of the blast were all able to go home after hospital treatment.

The Radio 1 disc jockey Chris Evans was fined a day's pay yesterday for failing to turn up for his breakfast show on Thursday. The film-a-year presenter, whose company, Ginger Productions, makes the show for the BBC, is believed to have been fined about £7,000 by Radio 1's controller, Matthew Bannister. He spent almost 30 minutes in the controller's office where he was warned about fulfilling his contract. A BBC spokeswoman said: "Chris has been severely told off and his wages docked, which for him is quite substantial."

Mr Evans, 29, left Broadcaster House at 10am, refusing to speak about the incident which began when he decided to treat his production team to a Christmas lunch which lasted until early Thursday morning.

When he failed to turn up for work at 4.30am, Thursday's early morning DJ, Clive Warren, stayed on air while a deputy was roused to take over the show.

Yesterday Mr Evans returned to the airwaves in wise-cracking style and joked about missing the programme. "It's so good to be back, I feel like I've had a holiday in Bermuda – although it was more expensive than a week in Bermuda, obviously," he told listeners.

Mr Warren also made a dig at the errant star while signing off his early-morning show. "Do you want me to do another half-hour?" he joked. "No problem, it's the same price as yesterday. Has he turned up yet?"

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# international

Spiritual struggle: Tibet's exiled spiritual leader warns China against harming his choice for Panchen Lama

## Dalai Lama points finger at Peking

TIM McGIRK  
Dharamsala, India

If the Dalai Lama ever had occasion to lose his temper, it is with the Chinese these days. Helpless in Indian exile, the Dalai Lama, considered by Tibetans to be a compassionate, living Buddha, has seen the Chinese arrest a six-year-old boy he had discovered through his mystical powers to be the reincarnation of another high Tibetan lama.

Instead, the Chinese Communists enthroned their own candidate as Panchen Lama on 8 December, in a violation of ancient ritual that might be compared to the Archbishop of Canterbury being chosen by Chelsea football fans.

So does the Dalai Lama get mad about this?

"Mad? No, irritated, sometimes. But that passes. Sometimes I also feel like laughing. People see everything too seriously," said the Dalai Lama. His laughter is deep, resonant, like brassy notes from a long Tibetan trumpet which resound from one of the Buddhist monasteries near the Dalai Lama's exile abode in the pine forests of the Himalayan foothills.

He lives in a simple colonial bungalow above Dharamsala. Every day Western converts to Buddhism, their faces bright with the cold, join old Tibetan women, their hair plaited with turquoise nuggets in circling the Dalai Lama's home. But not all such pilgrims are harmless.

Indian police, responsible for the Dalai Lama's security, arrested two Tibetan men and a woman on 21 November on charges of spying for China. "Obviously, the Chinese send a lot of people to collect information on us, but they usually break down and talk," said Tushu Wangdi, foreign minister

Cheoky Nima. The nomad boy and his parents were seized by security Chinese last May in Nagchu district and have not been seen again. "We know he's not in his birthplace. Some say he's being held in Chengdu or Peking. From all we've heard, this young boy is very brilliant and sharp-minded." The Dalai Lama said he was afraid the child might be branded as troublesome and vanish into a psychiatric clinic where he would be dulled with drugs.

They had received weapons training in the Chinese army. Detailed maps of Dharamsala and photographs of the Dalai Lama's senior advisers were also unearthed by security officials. "The two spies were to be told of their real mission later on, from someone coming from Tibet," said Mr Wangdi.



Contenders: Tibet's lost boy, Gedhun Cheoky Nima, six (left); Peking's choice is Gyancain Norbu, also six

who thinks the Dalai Lama might have been a possible target for assassination.

The Dalai Lama agreed. "I'm not much worried, but at the same time, my life is so linked with the Tibetan issue that there is some basis for these fears," he told the *Independent*, in his first interview with British newspaper since Tibet's exiled god-king emerged from a three-week retreat of meditation that coincided with the Chinese enthronement of the rival Panchen Lama.

He is more worried about the fate of his reborn Panchen Lama, who died in January 1989, may

have been secretly killed by the Chinese. Many Tibetans dismissed the Panchen Lama as a Peking puppet, but in the last months of his life he became increasingly critical of China's occupation of Tibet. "Many of the Panchen Lama's close entourage believe he was murdered," the Dalai Lama said.

Shortly before the Panchen Lama left Peking for Tibet before his death, he is said to have engaged the highest-ranking Communist leaders in a heated argument. "Before his final departure to Lhasa, his personal bodyguard and physician were changed," Tibet's exiled leader said. Two days after a speech in which he openly castigated Chinese repression in Tibet, the Panchen Lama was stricken by chest pains.

"That night he called the doctor, but in the version we heard, it was a Chinese nurse who came. She gave him an injection and he fell into a coma. Tibetans said he was dead by sunrise." The Chinese say the Panchen Lama suffered a heart attack and died that afternoon.

"I feel a special moral responsibility to make sure that this boy - my Panchen Lama - is all right," said the Dalai Lama. Despite the meddling by Chinese Communists in the mystical Buddhist rites of finding a high lama, the Dalai Lama is still willing to talk to Peking. "As soon as any positive signal comes from Peking, I'm ready to talk without any pre-conditions. There's been no change in my 'middle road' approach. We don't necessarily want Tibet's complete separation from China." As for the Panchen Lama chosen by the Chinese, the Dalai Lama joked: "He's one Tibetan child who'll get the opportunity for a decent education - they'll probably spoil him terribly."



Temple guard: A trainee monk outside Peking's largest Tibetan Buddhist temple. The Chinese have clashed with the Dalai Lama over the selection of the Panchen Lama

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## All things black and beautiful

RUPERT CORNWELL  
Washington

For the bulk of white America the occasion marks the birth of a saviour. Jews observe Hanukkah, commemorating the rededication of the temple of Jerusalem in 165BC. But for millions of black Americans, the festival that spiritually matters most this Christmas season will be Kwanzaa.

On 26 December, just as the country finally returns to business, millions of blacks will begin a week-long celebration. Since its inception in 1966 as a way of honouring their African heritage, the Kwanzaa holiday has grown into a major festival and - inevitably - a commercial undertaking in its own right.

Bookstores stock Kwanzaa cards and T-shirts. There are recipes, cookbooks and presents, showcased this year at a "Kwanzaa Holiday Expo Market" that has turned one of New York's largest convention centres into a giant shopping mall.

Whether all this is quite what Kwanzaa's founder, black activist Maulana (Ron) Karenga, had in mind 29 years ago is another matter.

For Karenga, Kwanzaa was a festival aimed at countering Christmas, whose commercial excesses were beyond

the means of poor black Americans. It was not religious or political, nor dedicated to some vanished hero. What Karenga wanted was a cultural event, a celebration of family, community and black identity in a secular, soulless age.

And it remains basically that. If anything, Kwanzaa's original intentions have not been so much to the fore in a quarter of a century.

This has been the year of black awareness, ranging from the OJ Simpson case to the near-presidential candidacy of General Colin Powell to Louis Farrakhan's "Million Man March" in October.

Bookstores stock Kwanzaa cards and T-shirts. There are recipes, cookbooks and presents, showcased this year at a "Kwanzaa Holiday Expo Market" that has turned one of New York's largest convention centres into a giant shopping mall.

Kwanzaa's symbol is a seven-armed candle holder called the kinaras. Each day of the festival a candle is lit for each of the principles. But the true high spot is the karamu, or feast, on 31 December, part commemoration of ancestors, part summons to unity and part old-fashioned New Year's Eve revel.

## China adds to its legal armoury

TERESA POOLE  
Peking

Legislation specifying when martial law can be imposed is to be adopted by the Chinese government, in line with President Jiang Zemin's pronouncement this week that political and social stability is crucial for the country's development.

China's Criminal Procedure Law is also being revised as part of the crackdown on crime, making requirements for arrest "less strict", lengthening the time a suspect can be held without charge, but also giving defendants earlier access to a lawyer. The draft bill appears designed to provide a legal underpinning to existing government and police powers.

The image of China's legal system was tarnished further last week when Wei Jingsheng, the prominent dissident, was jailed for 14 years after being detained without charge for almost 20 months. Yesterday Mr Wei formally filed an appeal against the verdict and sentence, but his chance of success is nil.

The sentence meted out for Mr Wei and the martial-law legislation suggest the government is nervous about the potential for social unrest. But diplomats also welcomed Peking's attempt to spell out more detail for such laws, albeit in a country in which legal theory and practice are often far apart.

The draft martial law says a curfew can be imposed "in the event of tumour, riots or severe disturbances likely to endanger national unity, safety or public security". Inevitably all such moves are seen in the context of an increasingly frail paramount leader, Deng Xiaoping, 91, whose death is forecast by many analysts as likely to prompt a prolonged power struggle among the top leaders.

The changes to the judicial system are part of attempts to make court procedures more transparent, though the revisions are heavily weighted in favour of the police. Under the rewritten law, the time a suspect can be detained without formal arrest will be increased from 10 to 30 days. It remains to be seen whether this is implemented, given Mr Wei's 20-month detention before charge.

Without specifying exactly how, the law will also make arrest requirements "less strict", to aid the crime crackdown.

On the other side, defendants will be able to seek a lawyer's help much earlier. Under the existing rules, lawyers could join proceedings only seven days before a trial.

### IN BRIEF

Spanish officer dies in car-bomb blast

Lean - A Spanish army major, Luciano Cortizo Alvaro, 44, was killed and his 18-year-old daughter Beatriz lost a leg and part of an arm when a bomb believed to have been planted by Basque ETA separatists exploded under his car while it was stopped at an intersection. It was the third fatal attack in 11 days attributed to ETA. AP

### Clinton blow

Washington - The US Senate voted to join the House of Representatives in overriding President Bill Clinton's veto of a controversial bill aimed at curtailing investors' ability to sue for securities fraud - the first override of Mr Clinton's presidency. Reuter

### Cult suicide fear

Geneva - Investigations into the sudden disappearance of 16 people linked to the Order of the Solar Temple doomsday cult have turned up hints hinting at another mass suicide. Swiss police fear a sequel to the mass suicide-murder in Switzerland and Canada last year, in which cult members, leaders and children were killed. AP

### Pakistan reward

Peshawar - Pakistani police offered the equivalent of £18,000 for information leading to the arrest of people behind a bomb which killed 36 people on Thursday. Suspicion has fallen on Afghans, as well as Egyptian militants who have threatened Pakistan. Reuter

### Hijacker to die

Hong Kong - A Chinese court sentenced Chen Wenjian, 20, to death for the hijacking last June of the Macau to Hong Kong hydrofoil and the robbery of currency worth £844,000, reports said. AP

### Christmas cheers

Bethlehem - Ushering in the first Christmas celebrations under Palestinian rule, Soha Arafat, the Christian wife of the PLO chairman, Yasser Arafat, switched on the lights of a Christmas tree in Manger Square to the cheers of thousands of Palestinians. AP

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## the saturday story

# Oh what fun it is to have Christmas every day

Andy Park (and his dog) are Yuletide crazy. He never takes down the lights, eats turkey every day and gets through 2,400 mince pies a year.

**Paul Vallely went a-calling**

**A**t the last minute I realised that I hadn't bought a present. It was Christmas Day, to all intents and purposes, and all that was available on Paddington Station were the usual standby offerings: a box of Cadbury's Roses, a silk tie with a morose-looking Santa surrounded by present-demanding kids, and a pair of green socks with Rudolf the Reindeer on.

The tie was £9.99 and the socks were £4.99. I bought the socks, a sheet of wrapping paper and a little roll of Sellotape and jumped on the train to the West Country.

For anyone else, the socks would have been a once-a-year novelty. But Andy Park could wear them whenever he wanted. He is the man who celebrates Christmas every day.

This is serious stuff. Andy lives alone - "of course", he later added in revealing parentheses. He would have to: this is the man who in the course of his normal year gets through 2,400 mince pies, 100 bottles of sherry and 26 turkeys (he makes each one last a fortnight - "roast, stew and curry and then soup"). His home is permanently draped in streamers and banners proclaiming Seasons' Greetings. A Christmas tree stands like an unblinking sentinel in the corner of his living-room, and flashing lights pulsate all year round across the mantelpiece. Even his hapless dog, Pickles, sports a constant collar of tinsel. Andy Park lives with the titillus of the modern Christmas unceasing in his ears.

I left the train at Chippenham and took a taxi to Melksham. The driver, Stan, of Stan's Taxis, who was 80, was musing about only having one booking for Monday. He

intended to work normally on Christmas Day, he said; it was because he was religious.

"It's not about Christ. It's just Saturnalia."

Strictly speaking the Roman time for merrymaking and the exchange of gifts was 17 December, but we got the point. Stan was obviously a churchgoer.

"No, I never go to church.

The churches always get everything wrong. I just read the Bible. It's obvious, anyway, that Christ was not born at Christmas. There were shepherds in the fields, which there wouldn't be at that time of year. And John the Baptist, who was six months older, was born in the spring. So Jesus was born at Michaelmas. It's obvious, isn't it? Anyway, the Bible says there is only one day we should commemorate, and that's the Last Supper. 'Do this in memory of me.'

"Mind you," said Stan, his logic suddenly changing track, "if they are going to put up decorations, they should be up all the time, not just for 12 days. Jesus came to save the world: putting decorations up for a few days is a bit belittling, isn't it? They should leave them up all the year round."

Andy Park would agree with that. He has had his decorations up for seven years now. As we arrived at the little terraced house on a new estate in the centre of Melksham we saw that he has even had a Santa painted on his satellite dish.

Inside, Andy was doing a bit of maintenance on the flashing lights, which he had temporarily removed from the window. The rest of us may have to wonder every year when we get the box down from the attic whether the tree lights will work; not Andy, he

just fixes them when they bust. It is an expensive business: this perpetual Christmas. Andy reckons he spends an extra £1,000 a year on electricity, £400 on decorations and £300 on flashing lights maintenance (they are on eight hours a day on average). Then there is

**'People come carol-singing in June; they know I'll invite them in for a sherry'**

£1,000 a year on gifts, £720 on mince pies ("somehow makes them for me all the year round"), with the cost of his daily supply of turkey fluctuating significantly according to the season. "And then there's about 100 bottles of sherry - I always have two kinds on the go, sweet and dry." What brands? "All types, I'm not fussy - Bristol Cream, Cyprus sherry, Irish sherry ..."

Irish sherry? It would be easy to poke fun, but the grotesque

caricature that is Andy Park's interminable Yuletide says something about the more general paradigm of Christmas, which is nowadays accepted with only nominal objection. His relentless wassail is merely a *reductio ad absurdum* of the *ad absurdum* we all behave.

"I love parties, big ones - I hire balls; but I also have small ones at home all the time. Christmas parties all year round. On the Longest Day I have a really big one. This year we had 300 people and 30 pipers playing 'Silent Night' on the lawn."

What do the neighbours think? "They love it. They join in. Sometimes they come carol-singing in June because they know I'll invite them in for sherry, though I make them sing the whole song through properly first."

Could this be true? There were 100 bottles around to ask. They were all at work. Andy was the only one at home.

His job is selling reconditioned cookers and fridges, which he advertises in the local paper. "It means I can work at any time of day. Christmas is no problem to me. People ring up desperate for a cooker on

Christmas Eve and I can sort them out. Last year I went out at 9am on Christmas morning to wire one up after an emergency call from a woman with a big turkey on her hands and no oven."

If he transfers his festive spirit to his work, the process is not one-way. He is a bit of a dealer who comes to Christmas parties a year - if people pop round. "I've usually got something for them. So I get stuff in job lots: 20 things for the price of 10. I do deals all the time. I've got a loft full of wrapping paper I bought last year."

All this ceaseless frolicking began seven years ago, when he found himself living alone. "I was divorced, of course." Of course. "And I thought the place looked so good with the deck up, I decided to leave them there." Friends repeated the old superstition about misfortune following if the trapings of festivity were not removed when Twelfth Night was done. "They said I would have bad luck, but I've never had none. I love my life. It has no stress."

Not that he just leaves them there. "I change them

every three months or so, because they start to look a bit fragile. I stock up at Christmas so I have plenty for the year. My niece Diana, is coming round tomorrow to clean them all with a feather duster."

There are no problems with dropping needles, of course,

**'Til change the tree soon because the snow is getting grimy'**

Still, Andy keeps in step with tradition over what Shakespeare called "the baleful mistletoe". Baleful, perhaps, because it was said to have been the branch used to kill Balder, the Scandinavian god of light, or because of its links with Druidic human sacrifice. Andy's mistletoe is baleful too; it is plastic.

Over lunch in a local pub, where he dithered over versions but finally settled on turkey, we began to get more philosophical. Can things be defined without a context? I asked. "What?" he replied. Well, just as life is made purposeful and poignant by death, isn't it?"

animal events given meaning by the quotidian days which surround it? "Not really. On 25 December I feel even better because everyone else has decided to join me in Christmas, everyone is in a party mood."

He videos the Queen's Speech for playing back during the months to come.

There is, however, no crib among the seasonal adornments. "I was brought up RC,

but I don't go much now. I'm

as happy with the Methodists or Spiritualists. But for me,

Christmas is mainly to do with

festivities and atmosphere. My

two favourite carols are 'Silent Night' and 'Lonely This Christmas', by Mud - you must know it; it was a Number One in the Seventies." In emulation, Andy this year recorded his own Christmas record, "Yule-tide, Yeah", which describes as a bluegrass disco dance track. "Wiggle your bum, toast the day, the Yuletide way," say the lyrics, though sadly he sent it to EMI a month too late for a Christmas pressing.

"It's a time of rest, Christmas, really, isn't it." Andy summed up, thoughtfully, "watching the telly." *"Noel's Rockin' Party/Top of the Pops."*

It is also, I pointed out, the peak time for loneliness, suicides, family quarrels, divorces, depression and drunkenness. "Well, we don't really want to dwell on that do we?" he replied.

Above the little town of Melksham too the silent stars go by. Yet in the dark streets there shone, as I left, only the lights in the shopping centre. Andy Park is currently campaigning for the town council to keep the Christmas illuminations up all year. The promise of everlasting light, I fear, meant something altogether different.



Another day, another Christmas for Andy Park and Pickles. On Monday, though, the rest of the country will be joining in

Photograph: John Lawrence

## Jo Brand's week



I was alarmed to read this week that our national heroine, Kate Adie, has been injured in Sarajevo. A lone sniper perhaps? Sharpnel wounds? Or maybe brave Kate stood in front of a tank to protect small children? Nope, she slipped on ice and broke her ankle. That must have been galling; even Martin Bell got a bullet. Still, she's tucked up in a private hospital, but she still needs to keep her wits about her given that hygiene is probably controlled by the cleaning firm that costs the least. Let's hope she can bypass slippery floors and sidestep bacteria, not to mention the damage to her wallet (£30 an aspirin in some of these places, you know). Let's hope Kate is back on her feet very soon because, Kate, to paraphrase Bupa, you're amazing and we want you to stay that way.

Likewise Salman Rushdie has been in trouble while on a tour of Australia, sustaining injuries not from a fundamentalist Muslim, but in a car crash. Not many get-well cards coming from Iran, I expect.

I turned on the telly the other night to be confronted with a naked couple writhing about in happy abandon. Assuming it was part of *Sex with Paula*, I was surprised to discover it was in fact an advertisement for Accurist watches, the writhing couple being accompanied by the throaty

statement: "A man who gives an Accurist this Christmas deserves everything he gets." A good seeing-to, apparently. This ad was followed in the next break by an almost identical ad, apart from the fact that a corgie had been inserted. Despite similar writhing going on, the woman is revealed as a bit of an old hag, thus demonstrating that if you don't give an Accurist you will end up in bed with an ugly old slapper. Good God almighty, is Biff Bacon writing the copy for ads these days? Ironic it may well be, but funny it isn't, although no doubt it will appeal to that brain-dead section of the population whose personalities have deserted them and have been replaced by expensive clothes and 23-hour stints in the gym.

Along the same lines, we are informed by the advertisers that the reason most people don't drink Martini is because they feel too ugly. That's obviously why I haven't



attempt to talk to our friends in Europe. Operation Resolute Rat, which is currently taking place in Bosnia, is unfortunate in that "rat" in that particular area translates as "war". Perhaps not the best way to kick off a cordial relationship between Nato and the former Yugoslavians. Better, I suppose, than the Bosnian general who was heard, while the peace negotiations were going on, to remark that they were searching for the final solution. Oh dear.

When I was younger and more naive I couldn't understand why some people argued that prison was not a deterrent. It certainly looked it to me. Similarly, I could not understand why some people could possibly want to be admitted to a psychiatric hospital.

Having worked in the community I came to realise that some people's bones were so terrible that a break in hospital was looked upon as a bit of a treat.

Given the current outcry about Holloway, it appears not even basic human dignity is being maligned. Most of us have never been inside a prison and our version of it is a mixture of Cell Block H and snippets from the news, where of course we didn't see the frustration and neglect.

A while ago I did a comedy show inside Holloway, organised by another comedian. We were kept well away from the main bit of the prison and

although everything was done to prevent us really getting a picture of how things were, the nature of the heckling gave us all some idea of the anger and desperation that existed.

The show itself was a bit of a disaster, because it was obviously so rare to gather outside the cells that all the women just wanted to have a chat and pretty much ignored us. At one point I felt I was performing to three hundred women who were doing time for murdering a fat woman comic. The main problem appeared to be a lack of staff, causing long periods of isolation for most inmates. A huge sense of relief flooded over me when the doors clunked shut behind us. Prison is still a deterrent for me.



Holloway: I was glad to get out

I did some publicity photos today and spent quite some time being made up, which is great because I am so hopeless at putting my own make-up on. In fact, the make-up woman did a good job and I was beginning to think I didn't look half bad. As I left the studio feeling rather smug, I heard an old bloke on the gate say to his friend, "There goes that fat girl off the telly." Cue... deflation.

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# Even a Pocahontas Christmas is a chance to dream

**W**hen pagans celebrated the mid-winter solstice, they had no pangs of conscience. They slaughtered a few animals, mixed up something hot and alcoholic and settled down to having a good time. True, they might have been plagued by the in-laws, difficult children and terrible hangovers, but the British Flintstones knew what the festival was about. They were ready for a break after months of freezing weather and more to come. The December feast was a chance for a change, an opportunity to feel good in the bleak mid-winter. People knew that they would have to return to the gloom, but at least they felt a warm glow for a while. In short, the celebration was a pleasant and worthwhile distraction from the misery of the damp and cold.

These days, we're nothing like as clear about what Christmas means. We torment ourselves with guilt, at the vast amount of spending, at all the food and the drink consumed. There is a sense of shame about it, a feeling that the paganism of the modern day is obscene and somehow should be abandoned. Each year, we carry on with the annual hinge, and then we hate ourselves for it. For a few days, we all know what it is to be the Princess of Wales.

And then there is the navel-gazing over the supposed hypocrisy of Christmas. Cynics decry the bonhomie. They dismiss the cheer that mysteriously appears in the third week of December, and disappears as quickly by the first week in January as misanthropy dominates once

again. There is also, as our letters' column has recently revealed, endless concern about whether or not children should be told the truth about Santa Claus. "We're damaging them by telling them lies," warns the anti-fantasy brigade. Meanwhile, the self-righteous look accusingly at church attendances and suggest that people lack sincerity, that they treat churches as theme parks, turning up for the Christmas Eve carol service never to darken a church door for the rest of the year.

All of these phenomena - the over-indulgence and the brief flirtation with church-going - lead many to think that Christmas is a rather sad exercise in empty consumerism, superficial religiosity and insincere philanthropy. Would it not be better if there were no Christmas at all?

To ask that question is to begin to reveal the modern meaning of the event. It is, like the pagan feast, a chance to live out a collective fantasy, an opportunity to imagine a different, sunnier world. The fact that that world disappears soon after does not make its invocation a waste of time.

For children the collective fantasy centres on Santa, a virtual deity, who loves all children and makes a trip to every home. He is an utterly benign figure. Suggesting his existence is not a lie; it is giving a child a chance to dream. The Santa image, and its notion of no-string-attached giving, is important in helping children have a sense of their own intrinsic value.



So what about the adult collective fantasy: the idea that we all love each other according to the principles of Christianity? All right, so we don't. And we never did. There is no point in feeling nostalgic if Christianity had ever really dictated everyday behaviour, the history of the world would have been very different.

No one really believes that their differences have suddenly dissolved at Christmas. We are meant to play along with the fantasy of Christmas, a bit like children who already know the truth about Santa. It does no harm to mark a few days in the year at a time when everyone takes the goodwill tablet. Who knows, like turkey, people might begin to fancy it all year around.

The Royal Family does not seem to have grasped this tradition. Princess Diana and the Queen, fighting to make their candidates King (Willis in Diana's case, Charles in the Queen's) could not let matters rest until January amid Yuletide good humour. So the Princess refused to turn up at Sandringham for Christmas and the Queen ordered a divorce, five days before Christmas Day. The spirit of Christmas does not seem quite to have reached the Supreme Governor of the Church of England.

Speaking of religion, Christian images are not as prevalent as they once were. Characters from *The Lion King* have replaced religious pictures on chocolate advent calendars. A plastic figure of Pocahontas is as sacred as a relic would once have been from Santiago de Com-

postela: Walt Disney is establishing a monopoly of the supernatural. We are also living in a period when fame, power and wealth create the elect, those apparently heading for the right life. Grace, honour and sanctity are conferred more by the camera than by good works.

But Christianity, at this time of the year, does still have a powerful message. To believers, Christmas represents a new beginning of unique impact on the world, the birth of a saviour for the human race. But even to those who do not believe, the season's message contradicts conventional values. What is splendid about Christianity is that it says the woman who makes Nike shoes on a Third World poverty wage is as important and valuable as the woman who endorses them for a huge fee. And the focus of worship at Christmas is not some great powerful, authority figure in a sharp suit, with loads of money and few scruples. It is, instead, a picture of helplessness, a needy baby. This is an image that emphasises the idea of renewal, going back to the pagan origins of the festival.

In short, it is never going to be Christmas every day. The whole point of it is to enjoy a special time, think and believe afresh, even if by Twelfth Night we're back to where we were on Christmas Eve. So follow the example of the Flintstones. Set aside the guilt, enjoy the feast, try being nice to people and let a little hypocrisy pass unremarked. The harsh winds of January are not far away.

## ■ LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ■

### Diana: betrayed, sidelined or ... awkward?

*From Mrs Jennifer Miller*

Sir: In your editorial "Divorce is the only answer for a modern age" (22 December), you unquestioningly accept that the Royal Family has sought to marginalise and exclude Princess Diana.

When she married, her own grandmother, Lady Fermoy, has been established at Court for years on the staff of the Queen Mother, whose close personal friend she was. Diana's brother-in-law was already a private secretary to the Queen, and her father, Earl Spencer, had been a royal equerry. She always had her own relatives and contracts within the royal household and cannot have been isolated as she now claims.

On her separation, Buckingham Palace announced that the Princess would still be invited to Balmoral and Sandringham, but even at Christmas 1992, she caused immense trouble by refusing to visit Sandringham, making it seem as if she were cruelly kept from her children at such a time.

When Diana wanted to resume public life, the Queen agreed last year that her daughter

ter-in-law should take on the prestigious role of spearheading celebrations for the 125th anniversary of the British Red Cross. During 1995 Diana has visited Russia, Japan, Hong Kong, Venice and Argentina, and travelled several times to the United States. Does this look like being sidelined?

The Prince of Wales gives Diana such a generous allowance that in May she was identified as a "Super A" shopper, one of a small group of really high-rolling consumers. Yours faithfully,

JENNIFER MILLER  
London SW15  
22 December

*From Mr Robert Readman*  
Sir: In advising (ordering) the Prince and Princess of Wales to divorce, the Queen and her advisors have seriously underestimated the depth of support for the Princess of Wales.

The Prince of Wales has betrayed his wife from the outset of his marriage. He now seeks to cast aside a woman who is 10 times the man that he is, obtain public approval for his mistress and still ascend the throne to become "Defender of

the Faith". For Prince Charles, as a divorcee, to become King would be an act of monumental hypocrisy, not only on his part but on the part of the Archbishop who places the crown upon his head.

The Royal Establishment, in its desperate attempt to shore up its crumbling edifice, is thrashing about in a frantic effort to preserve itself. But sidelining Princess Diana will only serve to further erode the Monarchy in the eyes of the people.

If Buckingham Palace cannot recognise that Diana is the real jewel in the Crown, it does not deserve the support and respect of the country.

Sincerely,  
ROBERT READMAN  
Sandbanks, Dorset  
21 December

*From Mr Gerard M Blair*  
Sir: Given the continuing troubles between the Prince and Princess of Wales, it seems unfortunate that they were unable to talk with President Clinton during his recent visit.

Yours faithfully,  
GERARD M BLAIR  
West Linton, Borders  
21 December

### Ranting about European monetary union

*From Mr Christopher Haskins*

Sir: Hamish McRae is perfectly entitled to be against European monetary union ("Why the ranters are right about EMU", 22 December). But he himself is beginning to rant when he brands as "stupid" those who believe in the idea - the leaders of 14 out of the 15 members.

Throughout the development of the European movement its supporters have been berated in this way, yet time and again they have proved correct. What's different this time?

Of course the implementation of monetary union is fraught with institutional and fiscal difficulties. But the tide of history is running towards greater economic as well as political harmony between states, and EMU is part of that process.

The need for the transfer of funds from the better-off to the less well-off regions of the Community is well-established, and will be reinforced in the future because of both EMU and enlargement. The idea that the United States economy only works because the population is perpetually on the move is a bit far-fetched.

So, we come back to the issue of devaluation - the last resort instrument that has plagued the British economy since the war. EMU must cer-

tainly rules that option out in the future - one of the strongest reasons for supporting it!

With the sad exception of the United Kingdom, the European political leaders continue to show imagination and courage in pressing on with EMU, despite the obstacles.

They most certainly are not being stupid.

Yours faithfully,  
CHRISTOPHER HASKINS  
Chairman  
Northern Foods  
Hull, East Yorkshire  
21 December

*From Mr Andrea Casalotti*  
Sir: Hamish McRae's attack on European monetary union ("Why the ranters are right about EMU", 22 December) is beginning to rant when he brands as "stupid" those who believe in the idea - the leaders of 14 out of the 15 members.

The debate in Germany over economic performance is not about the strength of the mark but about the loss of innovation. Germans know that future growth is guaranteed not by making the same products cheaper but by making them better. Britain will not stop its century old decline until it understands this.

Yours sincerely,  
ANDREA CASALOTTI  
London, NW1  
21 December

of its output that prosperity will be found. Look at the difference in quality of manufactures from a strong currency country like Germany and those from a weak currency country like Britain.

The debate in Germany over

economics is not about the strength of the mark but about the loss of innovation. Germans know that future growth is guaranteed not by making the same products cheaper but by making them better. Britain will not stop its century old decline until it understands this.

Yours sincerely,  
ANDREA CASALOTTI  
London, NW1  
21 December

*From Mr Henry Brownrigg*

Sir: There is a lot to be said for Europa's bull as a motif on the Euro (letter, 20 December). It is a lot jollier than the very anodyne alternatives now being considered. And as a rapist, its symbolism would certainly seem appropriate from the standpoint of, say, the British fishing industry. Perhaps, on the other side of the coin we could have Señor Portillo dressed as a matador.

Yours faithfully,  
HENRY BROWNREIGG  
London, SW5  
21 December

## DAVID AARONOVITCH

### Faith value

**O**ff all the indignities heaped upon the Prince of Wales this week, being told who not to screw by a tubby, middle-aged prelate must be the worst. The Venerable George Austin, Archdeacon of York, has spoken thus of Charles and Camilla (the woman whom HRH has adored for two decades): "If they remain friends, that's fine. If he carries on a relationship, that's quite another matter. Adultery is a sin."

As advice goes, this is in the "play it again, Nero" league. It is obvious that the more Charles and Camilla can get it together, the better off they will be. Then, at last, stiffness can migrate from the upper lip. She will begin to look younger and he can stop mounting horses (a traditional royal displacement activity).

But what is it that emboldens the Archdeacon to speak like this to the heir to the throne? He hasn't been trained by Relate or the Samaritans. The archdeacon tells us that an archdeacon is essentially little more than a bishop's nark. And don't be fooled by the "Venerable" - that can mean either "worthy of reverence on account of great age, religious associations, character, position etc" or simply "title given to archdeacon in the Church of England". In Austin's case, it is clearly the latter. And that is his sole qualification for seeking to direct the Royal Household - his senior membership of the C of E. So it is also that the Archdeacon of Canterbury, a man of extreme moderation - intellectually, spiritually and charismatically - as leader of the established church, has to be consulted by the Queen on whether Charles can divorce.

I can tolerate the Church in its place; doing good works, preaching tolerance and maintaining cathedrals. But dressing up in silly hats and carrying funny sticks, like extras in a bad remake of *The Prisoner of Zenda*, or intoning platitudinous rubbish in a sing-song voice does not, in my opinion, qualify you for a major role in deciding the constitutional future of the nation. If the Queen wanted good advice, she should have consulted Claire Rayner ("Darling, of course you're anxious, but nobody will thank you for getting involved. Have you thought about Prozac?")

My own preference would be for Charles to eschew religion altogether. The historical imperatives behind the establishment of the Church of England have now been exhausted. We do not need a replacement. But for some time now, I have been uncomfortably aware that this rationalist viewpoint is increasingly unfashionable. Where previously Christians and other Deists used to keep quiet for fear of ridicule, today's dinner parties are dominated by bold confessions of faith.

Only a few weeks ago, two very good friends of mine proudly told an animated group of media folk that they were experiencing immense benefit from "psychic massage". I got ready for a really good scoff (how does the masseuse get his fingers through your ears, that kind of thing), until I realised that everyone else was taking it seriously.

My unbelief was passed, bordering on the relic of duller, more rational times. Within minutes, perfectly sensible people were swapping tales of the New Age, of crystals, reflexology, aromatherapy and God. It is now perfectly possible to be assailed for your improbable faith in European Monetary Union by someone who wishes to be reincarnated as an ant.

Admitting defeat, I propose that we handle this whole establishment question in a more efficient manner. My proposal is this: the State (Queen, PM, Governor of the Bank of England and Director-General of the BBC) should put the contract for established church or religion, out to tender. Applicants could be judged on the basis of their modernity, the enthusiasm of their adherents, the age and gender profile of their congregations and what they offer in the afterlife.

Once awarded, the contract should be reviewed at the beginning of each reign by Osgood, whose first Director-General should be anyone other than the Venerable George Austin.

### QUOTE UNQUOTE

Apart from a few set-piece debates, the Chamber of the House of Commons is dead and to a large extent irrelevant. It is no longer the forum of the nation - Lord Weatherill, former Speaker

For me, the currency of dead caring at a painful time such as this is silence - Frances Shand-Kydd, the Princess of Wales's mother

The Royal Family would be a bargain if we paid them twice as much - Kenneth Baker, former Home Secretary

Now Santa Claus is degenerated, we'll work on God next - Merle Hoffman, feminist, on New York's first female Father Christmas

She was a very nice girl, but Father Christmas should be big and fat and jolly. She didn't say 'ho, ho, ho' once - Helen Doherty, on Mother Christmas at a council-run grotto in Luton

This guy was the original soap scriptwriter. I was amazed by the outrageousness of the characters and situations and the pitch of the drama - Darren Star, creator of American soap operas including *Beverly Hills 90210*, on Charles Dickens

When things go wrong, Antarctica is one of the cruellest, most unforgiving places on Earth - Roger Mear, who abandoned his solo unsupported crossing of the Antarctic due to bad weather conditions and problems with his sledges

### Why drug killings threaten ceasefire

*From Mr Sean Kearney*

"How the guns kept drugs out of Belfast" (31 December) states that everyone relaxes after a murder when it becomes clear that "the incident represents no threat to the ceasefires". In our experience, far from relaxing, everyone is greatly apprehensive after the recent murders and few accept that they are not a breach of the ceasefire.

Mr McKitterick writes that "in the Republican districts, where drugs were taking hold, many people openly approved of this violence." A minority of people can be found to approve of the most dastardly deeds, but for everyone who approves there are three victims and their families who strongly disapprove.

Our view is that the IRA and its loyalist counterparts are guilty of the vilest human rights abuses, and the latest murders, leaving 10 children without fathers at Christmas, amount in an atrocity. To excuse these murders on social grounds is akin to arguing that the Nazis introduced law and order to a society that lacked it in the Thirties. The IRA would impose a similar regime here in Northern Ireland. We call on all right-thinking people to reject violence unequivocally.

Yours sincerely,

SEAN KEARNEY  
Families Against Intimidation and Terror  
Belfast  
22 December

### Dry measure

*From Mr Michael D Mitchell*

Sir: I can tell Simon Martin (Letters, 18 December) why the Government won't make alcohol available on prescription. It's because prescriptions are so ruddy expensive that nobody would drink anything, and Tony coffees would be even emptier than they are already. Yours faithfully,

MICHAEL D. MITCHELL  
Blackwell Heath,  
Buckinghamshire

19:3 and the Talmud, which predicted that "when the Messiah is to be revealed a star will rise in the east..." It may also echo the story of the birth of Mithras where a star fell from the sky and was followed by Zoroastrian priests called "Magi" on their way to worship the newly born god.

Astronomers look for a celestial sign that existed only in the imagination of the evangelists.

Yours faithfully,  
STUART CAMPBELL  
Edinburgh  
19 December

*Boxed Broadway*

*From Professor Peter Smith*

Sir: May I add a footnote to Sue Rolfe's letter (21 December) about the Theatre Museum's archival videotape collection of stage productions? A similar archive can be found at the New York Public Library branch at Lincoln Center, where the kind of unions-permitted recording she describes has been taking

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Letters may be

e to dream

## comment

PROFILE : Camilla Parker-Bowles

## In silence she awaits her Prince

**Charles may never remarry, but that does not make his mistress a loser, argues Mary Braid**

Once again Camilla Parker-Bowles proved something of a nightmare assignment for the paparazzi yesterday. In the media scramble following the Queen's plot this week to her son and daughter-in-law to seek a divorce, the Princess of Wales at least rewarded photographers by turning up outside her west London gym with Prince Harry and Prince William in tow. The future king's mistress, by contrast, seemed to have gone to ground.

Once again the contrast between the two women was stark. Beautiful, saucy Diana, never more alive than in front of a camera, was still basking it out in the media glare. Camilla, the witch with the lived-in face who shattered a national fairytale without even having the decency to be beautiful, remained resolutely publicity-shy – even when her Prince revealed to the world that, after a relationship spanning 20 years, he has no plans to marry her.

But then silence and discretion are Camilla's trademarks. This is a woman who has endured without a whisper an avalanche of public insults, even a pelting with bread rolls by a customer in her local supermarket after Prince Charles told millions about their affair on television (she no longer does her own shopping). This is a woman who once encountered a journalist breaking into her downstairs loo; and who had the contents of a family album, taken without her consent, splashed all over a newspaper. There was a photograph of her in a bikini and another of the Prince of Wales with Camilla's baby son Tom, now 20 and 'the Prince's godchild, in his arms.

Perhaps the difference in approach between the wife and the mistress – they are 14 years apart in age – marks an abandonment by young aristocrats of the upper-class code that sanctioned discreet affairs as an integral part of the business of marriage, and frowned on the public airing of scandal. It was this code that allowed Queen Alexandra to invite Camilla's great-grandmother, Alice Keppel, mistress to

Edward VII, to join the family around her husband's deathbed.

Times have clearly changed. But in Camilla we have a blue-blood who still plays the game by great-grandmother's rules. In the three years since her affair with the future monarch became public she has said nothing. Neither has she licensed friends to have a quiet word with the media on her behalf.

With so little from the horse's mouth, the question of whether she is weeping her way through this weekend – lonely, washed-up, middle-aged woman who forfeited marriage and social standing for love – is largely speculation. It is just as likely that the woman Prince Charles describes as his "touchstone" is looking forward to Christmas, optimistic that at last her relationship with Charles is being manoeuvred into calmer waters.

There are two contrasting public views of Camilla Parker-Bowles. One has her as a Barbour-wearing, fox-hunting, country-loving good sort, fun but rather unintellectual.

The other is more Machiavellian. It rests to some extent on a photograph of Mrs Parker-Bowles and the young Princess Diana during her courtship with Prince Charles. Given what we now know, the image of the mistress perhaps offering a little friendly prenuptial advice is a touch chilling.

In fact Camilla Parker-Bowles has a conventional aristocratic background. She was the first of three children to be born to Major Bruce Shand, wine merchant, charabanc owner and vice lord-lieutenant of east Sussex, and his wife, Rosalind Cubitt, whose family which made a fortune building London's Belgrave. A life of leisurely luxury was ensured for Camilla when one of her Cubitt grandparents left her a £500,000 inheritance. Her family had well-established connections with the Royal Household.

She had the usual British upper-class education, failing to take any A-levels but managing a year at Swiss finishing school. She came out in 1964. It was the swinging and socially fluent Sixties, but for girls



Camilla Parker-Bowles: unlikely saviour of the monarchy?

Photograph: George Phillips

like Camilla society had not really changed. More than 300 well-bred girls were presented at court that year, amid a round of parties which allowed the richest families in the land to introduce their offspring to each other. Peter Townend, society correspondent for *Tatler* for 40 years, remembers Camilla, but only vaguely. "She was not particularly beautiful or outstanding in any way, but she was nice."

The duchess' ambition was to snare a rich and eligible man by the end of the season. Marriage was what they had been raised for. Camilla was almost spinsterly by the time she married Andrew Parker-Bowles, a young adjutant in the Blues and Royals.

Camilla first met Prince Charles at a polo match in 1970. He became smitten with her bubbly personality and the first phase of their long relationship began. But Charles dithered about proposing, and while he was away at a long tour at sea she accepted the proposal of the rival suitor, Parker-Bowles.

Her affair with the Prince appar-

ently resumed in the late Seventies, by which time her husband was a polo-playing friend of the Prince, and Silver Stick in Waiting at the Court. It seems that Brigadier Parker-Bowles, who apparently exercised some latitude with his own marriage vows, did not object as long as the affair was discreet. It remained that way until the Princess of Wales chose to make it public through Andrew Morton's first book. Says one newsman who has frequently doorstepped her: "She is one of the old school and her ex-husband is cut from the same cloth." He adds: "She and Prince Charles seem devoted to each other. You can't help thinking that's quite sweet after all these years."

Townend disputes the notion that Camilla is a woman who has lost it all. "I doubt if she wants to be Queen and go around opening bazaars. I think she is quite happy with her horses and she has her children, Tom and Laura." In other words, she may be content to be among a time-honoured tradition of royal mistresses, joining the

Prince on the Beaufort hunt and sharing his love of the countryside and painting. The new home she is waiting to move into, as a divorcee, is almost as luxurious as the one she shared with her husband. The difficult business of "royalising" Camilla may never be necessary.

Nigel Evans, editor of *Majesty* magazine, suggests that Camilla's silence, rather than Diana's openness, may yet prove the saving of the monarchy. It is a rather shaky theory, after years of intense public scrutiny of the Royal Family and at a time when public deference has all but disappeared.

Charles, Mr Evans argues, is simply reverting to royal type. "Having a mistress is more of a job requirement than anything else. Nearly every king before him has had one. The problem is that the Royal Family has portrayed itself as the ideal family and made itself middle-class. It is then expected to abide by middle-class values. The fact is that Charles and Diana are the fairy-tale. Camilla is the reality."

## No daring, no imagination, just cycle paths

**The Millennium Commission has made a big mistake in rejecting the Cardiff Opera House, says Peter Popham**

When the Millennium comes around, there will be bicycle paths threading across the nation. Kew Gardens will have a new seed bed and South Wales's Llanelli coastline will have had a wash and brush up. But when people ask to be shown the monument we have built to bear witness to our faith in the future, to our cultural vigour and aesthetic discernment, we will take them to a building site on Cardiff Bay and tell them, here is where it died.

Yesterday the Millennium Commission decided that, while the seed bank deserved £21.5m, the comparatively trivial sum of £2.7m requested by Cardiff Opera House Trust to eliminate uncertainties surrounding the project – budgeted at £86.5m – was £2.7m too much. The trust was not going to get a penny.

Lord Cribbwell, chairman of the trust, will go to the Commission next week to argue his case. But unless it changes its mind, Britain's best chance of welcoming the new age with a gesture of daring and imagination to rival Sydney Opera House or the Pompidou Centre will probably have been lost for ever.

The architect of the project

is a woman called Zaha Hadid. Though born in Baghdad and brought up all over the place, she is a British-made architect: the unique hothouse of London's Architectural Association brought her gift, like those of many brilliant foreign architects before her, to fruition.

But like all too many of them,

she has discovered that her talent is too rich for domestic consumption.

Her first real recognition came from abroad, when 12 years ago she won the competition, against 539 entries, to build a clutch on the Peak, the highest point on Hong Kong. The project was eventually shelved, but its beauty and histrionic originality brought her worldwide fame. The works she has actually built are both in Germany. The closest she has come to executing a commission in Britain was earlier this year, when she designed an exhibition stand for the magazine *Blueprint*. Its lifespan was less than a fortnight.

It's not merely British timidity that keeps Zaha from putting her stamp on our towns and cities. For hers is a very

particular talent: the most dashing exponent of deconstructivism, she is best known so far for the extraordinary paintings which accompany her competition entries, which depict landscapes that are shimmeringly alive, molten, controlled explosions. Her buildings are like that, too: harking back to the heroic interludes of Russian Suprematism and Italian Futurism, in the dawn of Modernism, when everything seemed possible, even the redemption of industrial society, before the Miesian right angle and the blank curtain wall got our cities in grip.

Everything she designs is exhilarating. This is architecture conceived not as a slow accretion of certainties but as an eruption of planes and angles and colours and functions, a frozen nanosecond in the endless flux. She may be the most original architectural form maker since Le Corbusier or Frank Lloyd Wright.

This does not mean she is an architect for all seasons. While other imaginative architects like her former teacher Rem Koolhaas have succeeded in adapting their visions to the demands of down-to-earth briefs, it is probable that a Zaha-designed house would best suit one of her confirmed fans. The fire station she built in Weil am Rhein, Germany, was commissioned by the furniture makers Vitra, who have long been admirers of her work.

But the Opera House scheme at Cardiff was exactly the sort of project she was put on earth to realise: large in scale, stupendous in its impact, a raging bonfire of a building. Yet it would also have been a highly practical one: a brilliant project team was in the process of ensuring that in all technical specifications the building would have been superb.

The scheme has already seen off the timidity of the trustees (who, after Hadid was confirmed as winner, attempted to offer the job to less controversial runners-up), and the predictable hostility of the citizens. Now it has been condemned by a Commission which, by this decision, confirms the already widespread suspicion that it does not have the faintest idea what it is trying to do.

## Shopping on the road to Damascus

Once more this year we have been told that Christmas sales are down. Hardly surprising. Christmas shopping having become such a merciless ordeal. Useless goods that children have been relentlessly programmed to expect are piled along aisles where distraught people struggle to remain clear-headed despite the brain-garbling cacophony of Yuletide muzak. The sales staff, mostly amateur at this time of year, are even less helpful than usual. Getting to the shops and home again, whether at the mercy of traffic jams, haphazard bus services or inadequate trains, adds to the other joylessness of the experience.



GERMAINE GREER

Such considerations prompted me this year to try a new tack, to make the shopping an end in itself, to concentrate on enjoying the getting and letting the giving take care of itself. I sought a place that was neither predominantly Christian, nor degraded by generations of consumerism, beset neither by avid traders nor by desperate spivs. I decided to do my Christmas shopping in Damascus.

It was, I know now, the right decision. The only fly in my spikenard was British Airways. At roughly the time when our flight should have touched down at Damascus, we were told that, as the airport was closed owing to fog, we would be overflying to Amman. As such inconveniences are only to be expected, you would think that the world's favourite airline would have a routine for dealing with them. Apparently not. For an hour we sat in the air. Then we were allowed into an airport lounge, nothing to eat, nothing to drink, no toilets. After another



price; we had spent, by Western com-

putation, pennies.

There are souks and souks. You can be trampled, badgered, rooked and run over in a souk, but not in a Syrian souk. Though they may be busy, Syrian souks are not jostling. Where veiled ladies move majestically, unmindful of passing traffic, pushing

"We sat, we sniffed, we discussed": the pleasure of shopping in a Syrian souk

Spirits, and many more visit the city: I gave up speculating about who might be who. So unprovincial are the Damascenes that even in the mosques nobody was disturbed by my outlandish presence.

What they might have noticed is that I did my shopping with a tight western face; when I realised that mine was the only such face I concentrated on clearing my mind of the kind of diffuse tension that afflicts Occidentals. I began to make myself live in the now, enjoying my search for the perfect sugared almond, the whitest belly-dancing dress, I drank the coriander coffee the merchants offered me, allowing the negotiation to mature pleasantly until each party was satisfied. The merchant, for his part, wanted to show me this for this price, that for that, to teach me about his wares, to see how I reacted. To close the sale too quickly was not only to disappoint him but to insult him in some subtle way.

Then he would even the score by giving me a gift. When I left the confiserie of Ghraoui, the lad who served me put a glacé aubergine, a sticky four-inch tourmaline stuffed with ground walnuts, in my hand, a sign that I had bought too much too fast. I took my punishment and discovered that aubergine is of course a fruit.

For five days I wandered among hawk-faced desert Arabes patiently tying shoe after shoe on their children's feet, brides peering at themselves in flyspecked mirrors to see how various fantastic coronets of paste and fake pearls became them, clutches of dour-faced ladies examining heaps of apparently identical pyjamas, past the market of caparisons for horses, down the street of the dye-sellers, the blacksmiths, the butchers, through the fleamarket, amid the glittering booths of the goldsmiths. I made mistakes and I got things right. I hope my friends will like what I give them; if they don't, malesk.

The gift that tells him  
you love him  
you hate him  
you miss him  
you want him.



Swatch The design of a Swatch watch with a leather strap. The strap is dark brown and appears to be made of a textured material.

The Swatch Watchhouse, Peoples Place, London EC2R 8DU. Tel: 0171 437 1222. Fax: 0171 437 1223.

For further details, contact the Swatch Watchhouse, Peoples Place, London EC2R 8DU. Tel: 0171 437 1222. Fax: 0171 437 1223.

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## obituaries / gazette

# Sir Trenchard Cox

Trenchard Cox was the best-liked director of the Victoria and Albert Museum of the last half-century; a man whose wisdom, kindness and classless outlook inspired the widespread loyalty and support of the museum's staff. He was regarded with a respect bordering on devotion by all but the most turbulent of his colleagues, and grew to occupy a place in their affections more usually reserved for a much-loved parent.

Cox was offered the job at the V & A in 1953 by David (later Viscount) Eccles, the then Minister of Education responsible for the appointment. At that time Director of the Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery, Cox was summoned to London for an interview, at which Eccles informed him he had been selected to keep the seat warm for John Pope-Hennessy. "I thought he might have put it a little more delicately," Cox later recalled, "and I decided to stay for 11 years."

Openly opposed only by Arthur Lane, the brilliant, but depressive, Keeper of Ceramics who was later to take his own life, Cox's appointment to succeed Sir Leigh Ashton was greeted with general relief at the museum. Ashton's increasing unfitness to carry out his duties had given serious cause for concern, and morale at the V & A was low. Cox, who had engineered a remarkable post-war renaissance at Birmingham, possessed precisely the right qualities to restore confidence.

He was the least self-regarding of men (Pope-Hennessy described him in his memoirs as "almost neurotically modest") and a stranger to hauteur. Entering the V & A one day shortly before taking up his post with an armful of books for his new office, Cox found his way barred by a burly museum attendant. "You can't bring those books in here, sir," the man was overheard to say. "It's quite all right, it's quite all right," Cox replied. "I shall be working here myself in two weeks' time."

His first objective on arriving

at the V & A set the tone of his directorship. With the help of his assistant Terence Hodgkinson, Cox resolved to learn the names of all his several hundred staff within three weeks. He did so successfully, and thereafter would greet everyone at the museum, whatever their position, warmly and by name. He slipped up only once, when accidentally confusing the identities of two typists who had temporarily exchanged places.

Charlotte Bonham Carter once remarked that "Trenchard would never miss a charwoman's funeral", and he was famous for the concern he showed for his staff and their families. Former colleagues recall Cox arriving with hampers to cheer them up when overworked, arranging promotions they had not dared apply for, and always his kind words of encouragement. During his directorship he never once failed to send a note complimenting a curator on the opening of a new exhibition.

Free of the prejudices that were commonplace among his generation, Cox was consistently even-handed with appointments. In the early 1960s, for the first time in the V & A's history, he saw to it that a female research assistant was promoted Assistant Keeper, and again, for the first time, that a black warden was promoted Supervisor. Confirming his judgement, the same Supervisor subsequently went on to be appointed the museum's Chief Warden after Cox had retired.

An Old Etonian with a tentative, fastidious manner, a short step and extremely poor eyesight, he was a notoriously frightening motorist. Cox was not a difficult man to joke at. When talking animatedly in his squeaky, old-fashioned voice, he would wave his hands about and sway in a way reminiscent of Lewis Carroll's Dormouse, to whom he bore more than a passing resemblance. Such factors, together with his reluctance to reprove or discipline, also led some to consider Cox weak.

But perceptive contemporaries, including the unsparing Ellis Waterhouse, recognised Cox's determination and flair. At Birmingham, working with Dr Mary Woodall, Keeper of the Department of Art, Cox established the war-damaged Museum and Art Gallery as a leading national institution along fully metropolitan lines. He enjoyed excellent relations with the Birmingham City Corporation and founded one of the most successful museum Friends organisations of the period.

Cox was also a connoisseur who had a good eye both for objects and their display. Acquisitions he made for the V & A included the superb jade wine-cup of Shah Jehan, generally considered to be the museum's most distinguished post-war Indian acquisition. And during Cox's directorship the museum's appearance and the various exhibitions staged there, notably the exhibition of *Opus Anglicanum* in the early 1960s, were of a consistently high standard.

Scrupulous in spending public money, Cox was nevertheless fortunate that the funding of museum purchases was less problematical in his day than today. For Birmingham he acquired five fine portraits by Arthur Devis, offered to the museum by an elderly local resident who had been left them by her father as an insurance against hard times. Of several independent valuations of the pictures Cox obtained, he offered their owner the highest figure in view of her straitened circumstances.

An able linguist and scholar, Cox graduated from Cambridge with a First Class degree in Modern Languages and went on to study art history at Berlin University under Adolf Goldschmidt. He always felt at home on the Continent, above all in France (of whose culinary traditions he was a keen student) and forged firm friendships with many of his museum colleagues overseas. His publications included well-regarded books on *Jehan Fouquet*,

*Native of Tours* (1931) and *David Cox* (1947).

Trenchard Cox's greatest strength was without question his facility with people, and his greatest quality his moral weight. He was also a shrewd judge of character and ability, quick to recognise potential in others and to promote their achievements. Such factors, together with his reluctance to reprove or discipline, also led some to consider Cox weak.

great enabler, and as the single most formative influence in their professional lives.

In retirement Cox devoted much time and energy to the activities of St Martin-in-the-Fields. He served the parish as People's Warden from 1968 to 1979, and was staunch in his support of the social welfare work for which St Martin's is well known. Cox was devoted to his wife, Maisie, and greatly affected by her death in 1973.

George Ireland

*George Trenchard Cox, museum director: born 31 July 1905; Assistant to the Keeper, the Wallace Collection 1932-39; seconded to Home Office 1940-44; Director, Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery 1944-55; CBE 1954; Director and Secretary, Victoria and Albert Museum 1956-66; Kt 1961; member, Standing Committee on Museums and Galleries 1967-77; Honorary Fellow, Royal Academy 1981; married 1935 Maisie Anderson (died 1973); died 21 December 1995.*



Photograph: Hulton Deutsch

## Professor Charles Fletcher

The son of Sir Walter Morley Fletcher, the first Secretary of the Medical Research Council; educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge; an oar in the victorious Cambridge boat of 1933; with his background Charles Fletcher could have been assumed to be a pillar of the establishment. Far from it - Fletcher was a radical free-thinker, who made major contributions to the medicine of his day. He will be remembered particularly for his pioneering of medicine on television, his work on the dust diseases of coalminers, his campaigning on the hazards of cigarette smoking and for emphasising the importance of communication in medicine.

He was born in 1911. After Eton and Cambridge, he studied Medicine at St Bartholomew's Hospital, graduating in 1937. He later worked with Professor Leslie Wits at the Radcliffe Infirmary in Oxford, where in 1941 he was the first doctor to inject penicillin, new-

ly prepared by Howard Florey and Ernst Chain, for the treatment of infection in a human subject. It was then that he diagnosed his own diabetes, necessitating lifelong injections of insulin, an affliction bravely borne for more than 50 years.

There were moments when hypoglycaemia disturbed his spirits, as when he told his wife that the end of the world was at hand. Her response was to ask him to take a lump of sugar before that happened.

When the Medical Research Council sought a clinical scientist to head their newly established Pneumoconiosis Research Unit in Cardiff, Sir Michael Meltzer, successor to Fletcher's father, had no hesitation in selecting Charles Fletcher. It was an inspired choice. Fletcher was able to establish the closest relationship with the trade unions and the community of miners in South Wales. He also proved to be a remarkable talent scout, recruiting such individuals as

the epidemiologist Archie Cochrane to his unit.

In 1952, Sir John McMichael invited Charles Fletcher to join his Department of Medicine at the Postgraduate Medical School at Hammersmith Hospital. It was not an entirely happy move. Fletcher's interest in epidemiology, the study of disease in the community rather than in single subjects in a hospital environment, was not given the support that he deserved. Nevertheless, he was able to show conclusively that patients with chronic bronchitis would do better if they stopped smoking than if they were treated with expensive antibiotics.

It was at this time that he took a role in the anti-smoking campaign. Sir Richard Doll and Sir Austin Bradford Hill had shown that the modern epidemic of lung cancer was associated with cigarette smoking, but it was Fletcher, with the support of Sir George Godber at the Department of Health, who persuaded the Royal College of

Physicians to produce their epoch-making report in 1962 on the hazards of smoking. Fletcher himself was effectively the author of that report.

Tall and distinguished in appearance, and with thespian qualities, Charles Fletcher was perhaps a natural choice for television. It was he who, from 1958, collaborated with Richard Dimbleby in the production of the first major television series that dealt with medicine. *Your Life in Their Hands*. He was attacked by his professional colleagues for seeking personal publicity, something he would never have done, and his desire to see medicine not as a secret garden but as a subject for general debate has in time been fully vindicated.

Fletcher retired in 1975, but continued his campaigning. He gave an inspiring Rockfaring lecture on the importance of communication in medicine, emphasising how doctors should explain to their patients what they were up to.

He enjoyed his home in the Isle of Wight, where he was to suffer the first of the final cerebral episodes that were to end his life. He is survived by his wife Louisa, daughter of the first Baron Mottistone, and by his three children, one of whom, Susanna, is the wife of the Attorney-General, Sir Nicholas Lyell.

Christopher Booth

*Charles Montague Fletcher, physician: born 5 June 1911; Director, MRC Pneumoconiosis Research Unit 1945-52; CBE 1952; Physician to Hammersmith Hospital 1953-76; Reader, London University at Royal Post-graduate Medical School 1952-73; Professor of Clinical Epidemiology 1973-76 (Emeritus); Secretary, MRC Committee on Bronchitis Research 1954-76; Secretary, Committee on Smoking and Health 1961-71; Chairman, Ash 1971-78; president 1979-95; married 1941 Louisa Seely (one son, two daughters); died 15 December 1995.*



Fletcher: medicine not as a secret garden but as a subject for general debate  
Photograph: Hulton Deutsch

## Sir Colville Deverell

Colville Deverell had to face an exceptionally wide variety of problems and situations during his long career, first in government service, in a variety of postings in Africa and the Caribbean up until 1962, and then as the first Secretary-General of the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

Deverell retired from the Colonial Service in 1962, but very soon his great ability to get on with people at all levels and of different backgrounds, and to reconcile conflicting views, was harnessed in the cause of the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

Due to his tireless efforts at that time IPPF became firmly established as the largest international family planning organisation, many of the national family planning associations (particularly in Africa and Asia) having started through the encouragement of his evident fairness and integrity.

Educated at Portora School in Ulster, and Trinity College Dublin (for whom he played both cricket and tennis), he arrived in Kenya in 1931 as a district officer and spent his first seven years in the Colonial Service in some of the more remote districts which gave him his love and understanding of Africa.

In 1941 he was seconded to the Civil Affairs branch of East African Command, working throughout what is now Somalia and in Ethiopia, and reaching the rank of Colonel. His experience at this time convinced him that the way forward for the Somali peoples had to include political unity, as "Greater Somalia", as it was then called. But the decisions taken at the Italian peace treaty negotiations in 1946 rejected this concept, although Deverell (then on secondment to the War Office) worked hard to get it accepted, realising that this was an opportunity that would never

come again.

On his return to Kenya in 1946 he was made Secretary of the important Authority for Post War Development and Reconstruction, and then in 1949 became Administrative Secretary. In this capacity he was primarily responsible for the planning and organisation of the visit to Kenya of Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh in 1952, which ended so tragically with the death of King George VI. That same year Deverell was transferred to Jamaica as Colonial Secretary, and for the next three years his astute judgement and extrovert nature (helped surely by his prowess as a cricketer) were invaluable to the Governor, Sir Hugh Foot, in negotiating the awkward and difficult path towards independence.

In 1955 Deverell was appointed Governor of the Windward Islands, where he had to cope with a new phenomenon in the shape of Hurricane Janet and the huge devastation it caused in Grenada. But this crucial experience stood him in good stead when he was transferred as Governor of Mauritius in 1955.

Giorgio Fini, restaurateur, died Rome 18 December, aged 70. The first to sell pre-packaged pasta products (principally tortellini), he built his father's sausage factory up into an international food company, sold in 1989 to Kraft.

Andrew Lytle, writer, died Nashville, Tennessee 19 December, aged 92. Last surviving member of the "Agrarians", a US writers' movement of the 1930s which argued for a return to self-sufficient farming traditions. Author of *The Long Night* (1936) and *The Velvet Horn* (1957).

Mario Proacaccino, lawyer, died New York 20 December, aged 83. Stood unsuccessfully as Mayor of New York against John Lindsay in 1969, campaigning about the alienation of outer-borough New Yorkers from Manhattanites - the "limousine liberals".

Hajjeh Khanom Hashemi, died Tehran, 21 December, aged 90. Mother of the Iranian President, Hashemi Rafsanjani.

## Meanings of Christmas

The Rev John Kennedy, Secretary of the Division of Social Responsibility of the Methodist Church, opens our Christmas series with a salutary reflection on modern marriage.

We might airlift into our own painful domestic battleground. Probably not the royal family. They've got the uniforms, but are clearly walking wounded. A fleeing pregnant woman is a terrifying European Ghost of Christmas Past. The Ghost of this present Christmas is, of course, the Princess of Wales.

In the last 50 years we have endured a mass experiment in the recasting of intimate life on a pattern of uncoveted mutuality and personal fulfilment. One day we may learn to live like this, but not yet. The Holy Family has been given a new stereotype - the Redundant Male, the Struggling Single Mum, the self-obsessed Wild Child. The traditional grouping no longer offers a haven in a heartless world - it is often where the pain is.

The remedies on offer from Church and State are of little help. The fixed positions of the churches are collapsing daily. The Government's back-to-basics appeal to family values did recognise that public poli-

cy alone cannot remoralise society. But the enterprise finally expired this week in farce. David Ashby MP, one of the spear-carriers in that crusade, has effectively been designated homosexual, with a lot of help from his wife. Joe Orton could not have been more cruelly funny.

The Intimacy Wars look certain to shape our future as much as shooting wars have deformed our past. So how to make peace with ourselves? Perhaps we should first acknowledge the fraught nature of the enterprise that we are launched upon. One of Kathleen Loughlin's Bolshie pieces was called "Naming the Loss". What we in the West have lost is the empire of marriage. It has dissolved into a federal republic of intimacy whose borders are contested and many of its people stateless. It is much too early to draft a peace plan.

Meanwhile, refugees flood in from the old empire - politicians, princesses and clergy. In all this, a refashioned perception of the Holy Family can clarify rather than confuse. That family is so strange, so alien to our conventional expectations of the family, that there is room for all of us to find shelter within its ambiguities.

Kathleen's child and Josh will grow up in a world of intimacy quite different to the one their grandparents knew. That world is in the process of radical reshaping. We might dare to believe that God is engaged with us in that. We might imagine there is room within the human family for all kinds of relationship, and that such a relaxed generosity might both please God and sustain marriage. We might risk the conviction that God is the creator of our intimate lives, that in the very oddity of his coming among us he is truly Emmanuel, God With Us.

## Deaths

### Births, Marriages & Deaths

**DEATHS**  
FRANKLIN: Dr Owen Gutfreund, GP and artist, died peacefully at his home, on 30 December 1995, at University College Hospital, aged 62 years, having bravely fought cancer for 3½ years. Dearest loved by Sophie, his wife of 31 years, Dennis, his son, and his wife, Sally, and Sophie, his grandchildren. Also, Matija, brother Roger and Joe, six sons, Cousin Angela and many other family and friends. Funeral service to be held at St Peter's Church, Highgate, London NW1, on 29 December at 1pm. Instead of flowers, the family would appreciate donations to Hodgkin's Disease and Lymphoma Association, PO Box 275, Hadleywood, Leytonstone, London E14 5DL, telephone 0171-333 2011 or fax 0171-333 2012. Donations are charged at £1.50 a card.

**IN MEMORIAM**  
PARTRICK: In loving memory of Marjorie Partrick who died on Christmas Eve, 1987.

ANNOUNCEMENT FOR GAZETTE DEATHS  
MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Weddings, Birthdays, Reunions, etc.)  
Please send your news to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5TL, telephone 0171-333 2011 or fax 0171-333 2012. Please charge £1.50 a card.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD  
TODAY The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment receives the Queen's Guard at the Royal Horse Guards Parade, Whitehall, London SW1. The Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11 Queen's Gate, London SW7, will be relieved by the Edin Guards. CHRISTMAS EVE 1996: The Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11 Queen's Gate, London SW7, will be relieved by the Edin Guards.

**CHRISTMAS DAY**  
BIRTHDAYS: Princess Alexandra, 59; Prince Andrew, Duke of York, 46; Lord Amherst, 40; Mrs Sheila Browne, former principal, Newnham College, Cambridge, 71; Professor Kenneth Colman, chief medical officer, Department of Health, 54; Mr Quennip Crisp, 59; Professor Christopher Frayling, Pro-Rector, Royal College of Art, 49; Lord Grade, chairman, the Grade Company, 89; The Right Revd John Jones, Bishop of Sodor and Man, 63; Miss Annie Lennox, singer, 41; Professor Philip Lowe, Vice-Chancellor, Liverpool University, 56; Mr Tony Martin, singer and actor, 82; Sir Peter Maxwell, former Constable of St. James' Palace, 78; Mr Ian McEwan, novelist, 44; Professor Phyllida Barlowe, Professor of Social Work, Bristol University, 65; Mr John Shrimpton, High Commissioner to the Seychelles, 58; Lord Steppard of Didsbury, chairman, Grand Metropolitan, 63; Miss Siobhan Sparke, actress, 46; Mr Nigel Starmer-Saunders, sports commentator, 51; Sir Noel Stockdale, life president of the ASDA group, 75; The Right Revd Benjamin Vaughan, former Bishop of Swansea and Brecon, 78; Sir Christopher Wates, chief executive of Waterson Building Group, 56. Born on this day: Sir Isaac Newton, mathematician, physicist and astronomer, 1642; Humphrey DeForest Bogart, actor, 1899; Cab Calloway, jazz singer and bandleader, 1907. Died on this day: W.C. Fields (William Claude Dukenfield), comedian, 1946; Sir Charles Spencer Chaplin, comedian and film producer, 1977; John Junkin, 1994. On this day: Giuseppe Verdi's opera, *Il Trovatore*, was performed for the first time, Cairo, 1871; The Apollo 8 spacecraft orbited the moon and sent back a Christmas message, 1968.

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# business

## COMMENT

The threat now is that a rundown in excess inventories will bring the economy shuddering to a standstill in the first few months of 1996.

## Bears growl as pause for growth turns nasty

**A**s the markets pack up for Christmas, City economists have been sending unseasonal greetings for the new year. Analysts have been vying with one another for the most bearish forecast of growth in 1996.

Ten days ago, the average independent prediction for growth in 1996 was 2.4 per cent, down from 2.7 per cent in November. The cascade of downward revisions which started when Goldman Sachs cut its forecast to 1.7 per cent continues. James Capel, one of the more bullish houses, has just come down from 3 to 2.5 per cent. Morgan Stanley now expects 2.2 per cent.

The "growth pause" that started in the spring is turning nasty. What little expansion there was in the second and third quarters – equivalent to little more than half the 2.5 per cent underlying rate of growth in the economy – was largely accounted for by a big build-up in stocks. The threat now is that a rundown in excess inventories will bring the economy shuddering to a standstill in the first few months of 1996. Indeed the fall in imports from non-EU countries in November – concentrated in semi-manufactures – suggested that this process has already begun.

The new City consensus is that the economy will bounce back after this inventory correction. As James Capel puts it: "1995: spring chill, summer thaw." The main motor of expansion is expected to be consumer spending, as consumers splash out from rising real incomes lifted by tax cuts. The Treasury expects an additional boost from a rundown in savings.

Consumers did raid their piggybanks in the third quarter, but taking the first nine months of 1995 as a whole, the ratio of personal savings to disposable income has remained unchanged. For a sustained fall in the savings ratio to occur, there will have to be a real pick-up in confidence.

There are some signs that this is occurring – for example, the green shoots of a housing market recovery, the rise in purchases of vehicles in November. However, there is a real danger that the inventory correction could build on itself. Confidence would be hit hard if manufacturers were to lay off workers if meeting demand from stocks. Even if they don't, it is hard to envisage consumers really coming out of their shells while indebtedness remains so high and worries about job insecurity persist.

The worldwide background is hardly encouraging. Although exports picked up sharply in November to countries outside the EU, there is a strong likelihood that exports to the EU – for which the last information was for September – have been suffering. With the German economy also undergoing an inventory correction and the French economy afflicted by the effects of the strikes, the immediate prospects for exports to two of our main trading partners look bleak. The Treasury's forecast of overall growth in exports of just over 7 per cent in 1996 – this after less than 6 per cent in the current year – looks as optimistic as its prediction of 3.5 per cent growth in consumer expenditure.

The mean error in forecasting GDP a year ahead is at least 1 per cent. Growth could surprise on the upside – but at this stage it looks more likely to disappoint on the downside. Expect more cuts in base rates to warm up a rapidly chilling economy and the holy grail of a balanced budget to be postponed yet again, this time into the next millennium.

### BT's rebellion is fraught with risks

**W**hen enough is enough, the grand gesture – rebellion and the barricades – is always a tempting one. The trouble with such an approach, however, is that once the forces of revolution are unleashed, the outcome is never predictable; often it is to the disadvantage of the original protagonists. The risk to British Telecom in deciding to take on the regulator is precisely this.

To come out fighting may give the management an initial flush of euphoria and satisfaction after all these years of regulatory oppression, but is it really the right approach from the shareholders' point of view?

By deciding to test the regulator's demands before the Monopolies and Mergers Commission (the reference has not been made yet but it is only a matter of time), BT is plainly betting that the awful precedent of British Gas will not be repeated.

In that case the grand old man of monopolies took on the regulator before the MMC and ended up with an even worse deal than the one it chose to fight. It was the beginning of the end for British Gas. British Telecom too seems to want to take on the regulator all front.

Though its case may be a more powerful one than that of British Gas, this is a high-risk strategy. Breaking up British Telecom is an option which has always had plenty of intellectual support.

### Geest chief avoids a slip-up

**Y**ou have to hand it to David Sugden, chief executive of Geest. After slithering on every banana skin in sight over the past four years, he has kept his poise when it really mattered. Setting up a Dutch auction for his company's core plantation and import business ensured a better than expected price and, while shareholders' backs were turned, he has slipped out the back door with a £420m pay-off.

Not a bad deal for overseeing a slump in Geest's share price from a high of 479p only two years ago, to just 153p before yesterday's deal effectively unveiled a big For Sale sign over the rump convenience food business. They closed 39p higher at 192p as the market tried to decide which of Unigate, Northern Foods or Hillsdown would pounce first on Geest's small but profitable

food operation and its £60m cash pile. Mr Sugden may not have had much luck growing bananas, but he plainly plays a cool hand of corporate poker. Noboa, the Ecuadorian group behind the Bonita brand, was used to handsome effect in boosting the price well above the £75m touted in the papers even a few weeks ago. At £92m for the core business (excluding the £55m Fyffes is paying for two chartered ships), shareholders will probably feel he has belatedly earned his golden handshake.

So yes, Geest really will have no bananas, bringing to a close a 40 year trading link with the Windward Islands, a curious Commonwealth anachronism that outlasted all Britain's other agricultural links with its former colonies. The good news is that bananas and other supplies – over-supply from the more efficient suppliers in the dollar-bloc of Latin America will ensure that Fyffes will have to squeeze all the available economies of scale to make a decent return on its investment.

The price paid of only seven times earnings in a "normal" year, looks attractive only on the assumption that a disease-free, hurricane-free year is any more likely than the Black Saturday-blighted, tropical storm-swept seasons that have dogged Geest since it took the rash decision to move back up the production chain from its shipping roots into production. Fyffes' unchanged share price yesterday confirmed which company the market believes has struck the better deal.

## IN BRIEF

### Exxon man takes over at Nuclear Fuels

British Nuclear Fuels has appointed John Taylor, currently a vice-president of Exxon Chemical Europe, as chief executive of the state-owned company. Mr Taylor succeeds Neville Chamberlain, who is to become deputy chairman. The changes are intended to help BNFL further its drive into the international marketplace, which is an increasingly important part of its strategy. The company also faces radical changes in the UK with the forthcoming privatisation of its biggest customers, Nuclear Electric and Scottish Nuclear, which are being merged to form British Energy.

### French deal for Barclays

Barclays is to sell part of its French property loan portfolio to an investor consortium led by Lehman Brothers for Fr870m (£114m). The portfolio includes 193 property loans for office and housing developments and properties mainly in the Paris area.

### Ashbourne leases with Abbey Life

Ashbourne agreed a sale and leaseback of five of its nursing homes with Abbey Life for a net consideration of £16.8m cash. The leases will be for 35 years with rent reviews every five years. The aggregate initial amount of annual rent payable will be about £1.65m.

### Electrolux sells Spanish unit

Electrolux of Sweden has sold its Spanish cooker manufacturing unit, Castellbisbal, to IAR Group of Italy. The sale, for an undisclosed sum, will have no negative effect on 1995 results, as the provisions were already made in 1994 accounts. The unit has 367 employees, making mainly low-end gas cookers for the domestic market. Electrolux said that the profitability of the unit had been "unsatisfactory".

## YTT schedule shake-up alarms watchdog

**MATTHEW HORSMAN**  
Media Editor

Radical changes to the schedules of Yorkshire Television and Tyne Tees, proposed by TV executive Bruce Gyngell, have provoked grave concerns at the Independent Television Commission.

In an unusual move, the ITC said yesterday that it had "doubts whether the new programmes proposed would improve the services to be satisfied of viewers." But rather than insist the plans not go ahead, the commission has decided to monitor the new schedule until the end of March 1996 before making a final decision on whether the changes will be allowed.

The ITC has the right to intervene when ITV licence holders change their programming, to ensure that all services are in accordance with the terms of the licences it grants to television companies.

Mr Gyngell, who has made waves since he joined as managing director of Yorkshire

Tees earlier this year, has moved to reduce costs and to revamp the regional programming schedule.

At the heart of his new approach is the incorporation of regional segments within magazine-style programming, in place of regularly scheduled regional programmes.

While the ITC recognises that the change will mean more regional programming in peak viewing hours, there is concern that the licence-holders' commitment to non-news regional material may be waning.

The ITC has also pointed to Mr Gyngell's intention of making greater use of co-productions, which the commission fears might reduce the range and number of independent production companies supplying the two channels.

The outspoken Mr Gyngell, known for his pink shirts and his unorthodox management style, helped turn TV-am into one of the most successful franchises in the country.

Controversially, his company lost the licence to what is now

GMTV in 1992, prompting former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to send a letter expressing her disappointment.

Mr Gyngell spent the past three years in Australia with Kerry Packer's Nine Network, returning to join YTT in May.

YTT insiders say his management style has shaken up the group, and has provoked the departure of middle-level executives. Mr Gyngell, with the equally outspoken YTT chairman, Ward Thomas, considers that the ITV television system needs big changes – not least a reform of its fragmented regional character.

Already, YTT has joined forces with Granada and London Weekend Television, to jointly sell their programmes abroad.

Their desire to see a more integrated ITV sector could come at the expense of YTT's own independence, however, as Granada and MAI, Lord Hailsham's media and financial services company, have 15 per cent stakes in YTT and could launch lake-side bids. Under the Gov-

ernment's intended relaxation of ownership restrictions, likely to be in place by the end of next year, either company could own YTT's two licences outright.

The ITC is believed to be concerned that the regional mandate of ITV companies he safeguarded, despite the likely consolidation. Its decision to put Mr Gyngell's new plans on notice was seen last night as a warning shot to all ITV companies that the regional nature of the commercial television industry is to be maintained.

## Land buys remaining 50% of Broadgate

**JOHN SHEPHERD**

British Land has exchanged contracts to buy the outstanding 50 per cent stake in Broadgate Properties, the prestigious 1.5 million sq ft office development in the heart of the City of London, for £121.5m.

Final completion of the deal, which is conditional on approval from British Land shareholders, is expected by the middle of next month.

The Broadgate development is almost fully let. The property assets of Broadgate Properties were valued at £1.04bn on an open-market value on 15 December.

The company said: "The acquisition will allow us to consolidate the interests in the Broadgate and Ludgate estates, and to extract significant value from these outstanding office developments, where there are good prospects for long-term rental and capital growth."

It added that it also planned to refinance the existing £800m of bank borrowings of Broadgate Properties on "significantly improved terms". British Land shares rose 1p to 370p after the announcement.

In the year to 30 June 1995,

Broadgate Properties reported a pre-tax loss of £14.4m after charging exceptional items of £10.6m.

The loss compared with a profit in 1994 of £28.8m, after including an exceptional gain of £2.9m.

John Weston Smith, finance director of British Land, said the company was in "advanced negotiations" over refinancing Broadgate's debts. He hoped that the 60 banks originally involved in the multi-million-pound project would agree to a "straight debt replacement".

He added: "We're obviously looking to renegotiate fresh terms on a reduced margin rate over Libor. The fact that interest rates have also fallen also gives us a negotiating advantage, while the full acquisition of Broadgate has come at a good stage in the property cycle."

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# Saints face ultimate test of faith

**Steve Bale** discovers the secret of Northampton's success this season as they prepare to meet Bath in the Pilkington Cup today

 It says everything about the swathe Northampton have this season easily cut through English rugby union's Second Division that this afternoon's Pilkington Cup tie at Bath will tell them more about themselves than their 10 league games put together.

A glance at the figures reveals that Northampton are in a league of their own as far as National League Two is concerned: 10 straight wins at an average of 53-12 for a points differential of 402, more than 300 better than the next best.

The Saints have been playing divine rugby, fit to grace the First Division, and it is their misfortune that Bath, who happened to be the only other side in the national

leagues with a 10-from-10 record, have been playing rugby fit to grace the top of the First Division.

That Northampton are in the Second Division at all is not readily explicable, yet had the obvious truth that as they finished bottom last season they deserved to go down whatever the purported quality of the players at their disposal. Equally imponderable is whether they would be playing this sort of rugby now if they, rather than West Hartlepool and Harlequins, had somehow hung on last April.

"I would still rather it hadn't happened," Ian McGeechan, their coaching director, said. "But it's fair to say there would have been different pressures on us and different skills against us in the First Division and quite

clearly a different percentage of possession we could use."

"The commitment we made to each other was that winning would not be enough in the Second Division. We had to play like a top First Division side against Second Division opposition. We've probably surprised ourselves by how it's worked out, as how well we've done playing the game at the fastest possible pace. But going to Bath is as big an improvable as how our rugby would work in the league, because we haven't been having to prove ourselves week-in week-out."

McGeechan

is the former Scotland and Lions player and coach who discovered the only way was down when he took on the job at Franklin's Gardens at a time of last season when his new charges were already

sliding towards the Second Division. After the way this famous but faded club had dragged itself out of oblivion in the late Eighties, it was a bitter legacy.

Underlying Northampton's problems was that the departure of Barrie Corless, their first coaching director, and the ex-All Black captain Wayne Shelford had left a void that was left unfilled until McGeechan's arrival. The relationship between Glenn Ross, the New Zealander whom Shelford had been instrumental in hiring to coach the Saints, and the players deteriorated and by last season a team who had been challenging for honours in the early Nineties had lost both spirit and purpose.

Perhaps if needed the catharsis of relegation. Not only are

Northampton on their way back to the First Division at the first attempt, they now have a big-moey hacker and have voted themselves into a limited company in readiness for the first half of club professionalism. They are as well prepared as any club for the dam-burst that will come with the end of the Rugby Union's moratorium in May.

For this hectic progression from failure to success, Northampton owe their great-

est debt to Tim Rodber, the captain who took them down and is about to take them up again; a sort of Grand Old Duke of York in reverse. The most vital service he rendered was in persuading the members of last season's side to stay loyal, even though it can now be seen that the inevitably poorer standard of rugby has done nothing for his England prospects.

Not that others could complain. Martin Bayfield withstood Harlequins' blandish-

ments and kept his England place alongside Rodber. Paul Grayson and Matthew Dawson have formed a new England half-back partnership despite or should that be because of?

- playing for Northampton.

Even so, Rodber is probably right to lay much of the blame for his unwonted pallid performances against South Africa and Western Samoa at the door of Second Division rugby, however noble Northampton's intention may be to rise above this

self-inflicted milieu. "Going from the Second Division to international rugby has been tough for me," he said.

"But the loyalty factor was something I felt very strongly about. I had always played for Northampton and had no desire to play anywhere else. I canvassed everyone else, and everyone else was of the same opinion. So we're stuck together and been able to develop the style of rugby we wanted, iron out the wrinkles

as it were - which we would not have been able to do in the First Division."

The option of personal sacrifice in the interests of a wider cause comes well from a serving officer. But Lt Rodber of the Green Howards, the oldest unamalgamated regiment in the army, knows all too well that the price could yet be his England back-row place - hence the magnitude of today's match for Rodber personally, every bit as much as his company of Saints.

## Hopley hoping to go semi-pro

DAVID LLEWELLYN

Damian Hopley has become a part-time professional. Hopley, a centre, who turns out for his club Wasps in his England position of right wing in the Pilkington Cup fourth-round tie at Sale today, has given up a job in the City of London.

"I'm speaking to a number of people at the moment," Hopley, 25, said. "I'm looking to go semi-professional, working as a promotions officer or consultant." The trend to go full or part-time pro has already been set by, among others, Tony Underwood, Mario Bayfield, Dean Richards and Kyran Bracken.

"The England contract helped. To have that cushion made the decision a lot easier."

## St Helens looking to maintain tradition

Rugby League

DAVE HADFIELD

The Christmas derby may not after all, be a turkey doomed to have its neck wrung after this year.

Although the switch to summer rugby means that this festive season's will be the last league matches on Boxing Day and New Year's Day, St Helens are hoping to preserve the tradition. Saints have a lucrative annual meeting with Wigan on Boxing Day that they are reluctant to lose.

"We have come up with the idea that we should have a two-legged Winter Challenge, played on Boxing Day and New Year's Day, and decided on aggregate," said the Saints' chief executive, David Howes.

"We have put the idea to Wigan, who are interested in principle. The Rugby League would then have to give their permission, because it would fall outside the normal season."

The financial temptations are obvious, but there are also clear drawbacks. Players would be asked to perform during their close-season, and coaches could regard it all as an un-

necessary distraction. Despite that, other clubs which traditionally meet over the holiday period - like Hull and Hull KR or Halifax and Bradford - are certain to be at least interested in the prospect.

But the Bradford Bulls coach and chief executive, Brian Smith, sounded a note of caution: "You are asking spectators to pay to watch players out of season, in matches which mean nothing," he said. "I'm 99 per cent certain that it won't happen."

The Leeds coach, Dean Bell, admitted to some sadness if the pattern of holiday derbies is to come to an end. "It has become a great tradition for everyone to go out on the day after Christmas and see a traditional derby game," he said.

"But we have got to move on and summer rugby will hopefully bring more supporters through the turnstiles and give our game a lift."

Bell hopes to have Garry Schofield and Tony Kemp available again after injury for this Boxing Day's meeting with Castleford. "With this being the last Boxing Day fixture, it will be really special," Schofield said.

Meanwhile Leeds have failed in an attempt to sign Bailey's Australian scrum-half, Glen Tomlinson.

**Formula One drivers warned off karts**

**Motor sport**

The annual charity fund-raising Masters karting event attracted capacity crowds of 24,000 at Palais Omnisports in Paris last weekend despite the withdrawal of the Formula One champion Michael Schumacher at short notice.

Other leading Formula One drivers including David Coulthard, Jacques Villeneuve and Damon Hill were not allowed to compete by their teams because of the risk of injury.

A risk underlined by five drivers with Formula One experience who suffered injuries after the first night of the two-day event.

The Brazilian Roberto Moreno bruised his ribs, Finland's Mika Salo damaged a shoulder, the Italian Andrea Montermini cracked a rib, France's Olivier Grouillard bruised some ribs and the Italian Vincenzo Sospiri suffered a badly sprained wrist after Salo's kart landed upside down on him following a spectacular collision.

Philippe Streiff, the organiser, said the event has become too popular and competitive for its own good and may have to change in order to survive.

"I started this event for fun," said Streiff who is confined to a wheelchair since he broke his

neck in a Formula One test drive crash in Brazil six years ago. "It was a spectacle for the public and enjoyment for all the drivers, especially all the Formula One stars, who came to take part. But now it is too serious. The drivers go too fast and there are too many injuries."

The young guys take it very seriously and fight hard," Streiff said. "The crowd love to see it, but it is dangerous for the Formula One drivers, of course. So they need to have better protection - and we have to find a way of doing that to keep the event as successful as it is."

"We have to make the karts safer and we have to make the drivers more secure and better protected," he said.

Johnny Herbert, the winner of last season's British and Italian Grand Prix agreed with that analysis: "It is a great event and we all enjoy coming here each year," he said. "But you have to be careful. Injuries can be a problem, obviously, so we have to keep out of trouble."

"I know it has been worse this year. There have been a lot of very competitive younger guys from other junior formulae taking part, some of them karting champions and wearing protective waistcoats under their gear."

"Sometimes it is better to let them get on with it."

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**Nevill to seek out potential**

**Hockey**  
BILL COLWILL

The search for potential Sean Kerley will get under way during the coming week with the junior territorial and divisional tournaments in Sheffield and Bristol.

The best place to be will be the Aurora Club, Sheffield, for the women's under-21 event starting on Thursday. With England committed to the Under-21 European Cup in Cardiff in August, the national coach, Mary Nevill, will be keen to see what is in the locker. "It is a very important tournament. Everyone in contention for places for Cardiff will be there and it will be the last chance we have to see all the contenders on a level base in a competitive tournament situation."

Nevill also made it clear that another priority in Sheffield will be to have an early look at replacements - in view of the junior World Cup in Seoul in 1997 - for those players who will be over age after Cardiff.

**A tall order for Singleton**

**Basketball**  
DUNCAN HOOPER

Chester Jets have signed the 6ft 7in American Billy Singleton in an attempt to climb out of the Budweiser League's re-election places. The former Birmingham import makes his debut away to Thames Valley Tigers tonight. Despite last month reaching the League Trophy quarter-finals for the first time and having the league's leading scorer in American Waymon Boone, Chester have lost their last 11 games and slipped back into the bottom three.

Chester's slide worsened when the 6ft 5in former England veteran Dave Gardner left to join Manchester Giants. Chester coach Mike Burton said: "The biggest player on the court for us is only 6ft 5in, and that doesn't help in the league."

Chester have released the American Kareem Allen to make way for Singleton, who averaged 27 points a game with Birmingham two seasons ago.



Photograph: Peter Jay

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INDEPENDENT • SATURDAY 23 DECEMBER 1995

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**HYPERION**  
**12.25 Old Red 12.55 Cutthroat Kid**  
**1.25 Lochmagnan 1.55 Wild Rose Of York**  
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 2. DAWN ROCK (9) R McMillan 6.11 ... P Parker (3)  
 3. EXPLORE MONDIAL (21) Dyer 4.11 ... A Utton (3)  
 4. D-OUT (20) LADY'S SWEETHEART (17) C Parker 4.11 ... B Stacey  
 5. P MUSIC BOX (20) Mrs M McMillan 6.11 ... P Head  
 6. 4115-PF NAUGHTY TULURE (21) J O'Neil 6.11 ... J Stables  
 7. OLD BET (20) M Hayes 6.11 ... P Head  
 8. 2121-SANTA CONCERTO (20) Long 6.11 ... P Head  
 9. DOP SOUTHERN FLUTTER (18) N Hayes 6.11 ... J Appleby  
 10. THE READING (20) Mrs A Sweetnam 5.11 ...  
 11. CO VICTORY (20) C Parker 5.11 ... B Hardinge (3)  
 12. VOYAGER (20) Mrs A Sweetnam 4.11 ... P Head  
 13. 02826-0 CHAMBERLAIN (20) R Robertson 6.11 ... J Justice (7)  
 14. FOXMAN (20) I O'Neil 6.11 ... P McMillan (7)

BETTING: 5-4 Old Red, 2-3 Seven Towers, 5-1 Naughtily Tulure, 2-1 others.

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# sport



Left to right: Eric Cantona goes over the top; England 'fans' riot at Lansdowne Road; Duncan Ferguson feted on his return from prison; George Graham protests his innocence

Photographs: AP/Empics/Peter Jay/Reuter

## The year of men behaving badly

**Glenn Moore** looks back over 12 months which began with a kick, ended with a punch and had plenty of football in between countless trips to court

**C**hristmas approaches and football could certainly do with a season of goodwill. A year that opened with Eric Cantona vaulting into a fan draw to its conclusion with Graeme Le Saux grazing his knuckles on David Batty's stubble. Forget the TV series, if you want to see men behaving badly, go to the footie.

In between Cantona's and Le Saux's antics there were riots off the field and stampings on it; the England manager in court and the Scotland centre-forward in jail; managers treating their contracts with contempt, and a chairman and a director conducting a row through the tabloids.

However, it was even worse on the Continent. Patrice Loko of France, exposed himself to a policewoman and ended up in a mental hospital; Dynamo Kiev were expelled from the Champions' League for attempted bribery; and PAOK Salonika were taken over by hooligan supporters.

In the wider world, Pama's Colombian international Faustino Asprilla was convicted of a firearms offence; an Angolan manager was assassinated, allegedly by rival fans; and Uefa and Fifa, the governing bodies of European and world football respectively, engaged in a power struggle.

These overseas shenanigans

almost make Duncan Ferguson appear the nice boy Joe Royle claims he is. Even so, the days when the British game could loftily take the moral high ground are long gone. The most damaging case of all, the bribery allegations made against Bruce Grobbelaar, John Fashanu and Hans Segers, rumbles on with no sign of a conclusion.

But is the game morally bankrupt? Or is it merely suffering from more intensive media scrutiny? And if it is, does it merely reflect society? Yes, paradoxically, it probably the answer to all three questions, though it would be an outrageous (and potentially explosive) slur on the vast majority to suggest football people are morally bankrupt.

"You have to put things in perspective," Gordon Taylor, the chief executive of the PFA, the players' union, said. "There have been problems this year but nothing compared with the tragedies of the Eighties."

Taylor, who has first-hand experience of an intrusive media, adds that "the illumination of off-field activities is the price football pays for its increased status. It is an indication of just how much football is in 1995 is the increasing involvement of

players. They are young men who are under intense pressure and are expected to have old heads on young shoulders. Men of much more senior stature, politicians and businessmen, fall by the wayside."

Taylor, who has first-hand experience of an intrusive media, adds that "the illumination of off-field activities is the price football pays for its increased status. It is an indication of just how much football is in 1995 is the increasing involvement of

players are centre-stage, everything is on television now," he added. Indeed, Julian Dicks' stamp on John Spencer's head would not have received added sanction (he was booked at the time) were it not for television coverage. Ferguson would probably not have gone to jail.

In Scotland, especially, the legal authorities are picking up on televised incidents and Taylor added: "One thing that gave me great cause for concern in 1995 is the increasing involvement of the law. Some footballers are being judged by their club, their FA and the law. It is up to administrators to make sure we can show the community at large that football can handle its own affairs - within the law, but without recourse to it."

The FA are keenly aware of the game's image and react with greater speed and firmness than in the past. The Premier League have brought in tighter regulations and codes of conduct - although the latter appears to have had no impact on Alan Sugar, Ken Bates or Matthew Harding. There are others who should have been silent. Terry Venables' refusal to settle with his enemies is ill-advised while for Howard Wilkinson, the manager of Leeds, to speak in defence of George Graham was bizarre. As a senior figure in the League Managers' Association Wilkinson was representing the very men whose reputation had been tainted by Graham's conduct.

Managers also had to contend with ever-greater insecurity - 48 jobs changed hands. Mark McGhee may have struck a blow back by leaving Liverpool, but he was replaced by another manager, David Moyes, who has since been sacked.

The cynical fouts now result in a red card, not just a booking. The more skilful players are protected.

The future, however, is unclear. "Local refs are getting as bad as in our division does and fail to set the fire kids who say football is full of skulduggery," Kenny Swan, the assistant manager at Grimsby, said. "Morals could be questioned," he added.

Swain together with Brian Laws, the manager, has instituted a strict disciplinary code at Grimsby and players have responded. "When players misbehave you would like to be able to say, 'Let's get rid of him,' but they are too invested," Swan said. "You have to work towards a better attitude. If players are booked for it they are fined. It does not happen often."

Swain's attitude, which stems from playing under Brian Clough at Forest and working with Dario Gradi at Crewe, is growing. Stephen Lodge, the Barnsley referee, noted: "Discouraging and encouraging at free-kicks are the things players can easily avoid. There are more yellow cards but most of mine

are now for mistimed tackles, especially from behind."

Taylor believes the game is nowhere near as hard as it was 20 years ago and Lodge agrees.

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But that cuts both ways. The canonisation of Cantona and Ferguson, and indifference to the Bates-Harding row, shows that supporters are more concerned with the game than its morals. Apart from the alleged match-fixing, the Bosnian judgement and the prospect of revived spectator violence are greater dangers to football's prosperity.

"Football still attracts increasing sponsorship and attendances," Taylor said. "Next year we have Euro 96 which I hope will bring as much enjoyment as the World Cup in America. I hope we will see Pele's 'beautiful game'." Perhaps Santa will drop it down the chimney at Lancaster Gate.

### TODAY

#### Football

2.0 unies start

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP

Coventry v Everton

Liverpool v Arsenal

Manchester City v Chelsea

Midfielders v West Ham

Newcastle v Nottingham Forest

Spurs v Aston Villa

Wimbledon v Southampton

Wimbledon v Blackpool

ENDLESS LEAGUE FIRST DIVISION

Derry v Sunderland

Gresley v Leicester

Luton v Walsall

Portsmouth v Norwich

Reading v Wolves

Sheffield United v

Stoke v Birmingham

SECOND DIVISION

Barnsley v Hull City

Bentford v Coventry City

Bury v Bristol City

Notts County v Blackpool

Wycombe v Shrewsbury

Third Division

Bury v Colchester

Grimsby v Hartlepool

Plymouth v Cambridge

Pratton v Gillingham

Shrewsbury v Northampton

Torquay v Dartington

Wigan v Lincoln

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE FIRST DIVISION

Coleraine v Linfield

Second Division

Striking v Merton

THIRD DIVISION

Aikens Rovers v Caledonian Thistle

AIKES LEAGUE Premier Division: Aikens vs Dundrum

Dundrum vs Aikens

FOOTBALL

2.0 unless stated

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP

Arsenal v Queen's Park Rangers

Blackburn v Watford

Bolton v Liverpool

Brighton v Derby

Burnley v Nottingham Forest

Cardiff v Manchester United

Cheltenham v West Ham

Derby v Newcastle

Everton v Liverpool

Fulham v Nottingham Forest

Leeds v Manchester United

Leicester v Liverpool

London City v Chelsea

Millwall v Nottingham Forest

Millwall v Newcastle

Newcastle v Liverpool

Nottingham Forest v Liverpool

QPR v Newcastle

Sheffield Wednesday v Liverpool

Southampton v Liverpool

Spurs v Liverpool

Watford v Liverpool

West Ham v Liverpool

Wolves v Liverpool

Yarmouth v Liverpool

Zenith v Liverpool

WEEKEND FIXTURE GUIDE

January

Eric Cantona results

Matthew Stirling

Match of the Year

Steve McClaren

Michael O'Neill

Paul Reaney

Peter Shilton

Steve Watson

## Over the next year or so, Des Lynam is set to become a sort of cathode tube King Lear, presiding over a lost empire

**I**t was a black day for Rupert Murdoch. His organisation had spent considerable resources buying up the best available talent, and here was someone else moving in and buying it off him. What did they think they were doing? Had they no integrity? Had they no sense of the damage they were inflicting to the seed-bed of the game's future, otherwise known as Mr Murdoch's bank balance?

There was nothing for it but to take the matter to a higher authority. Thus the headline on the back page of the Sun on the morning of 23 December 1996 read: "Murdoch fury as Rockin' Ricky defects from Sky to ITV". Alongside it was a photograph of the multi-national tycoon striding into a terraced pub in Lancaster Gate alongside a sheepish looking man with a healthy waistline.

"After all we have been through, I am sorry to have to take Ricky to the British Board of Televised Darts Control," Murdoch was quoted as saying. "But players have got to be made to appreciate that their first loyalty must always be to the television company which signed them up."

It may sound absurd, but that kind of contractual relationship between sportsmen and their paymasters is the logical outcome of Murdoch's insistence this week that players in the new Rugby Super League sign a loyalty clause with him. Notwithstanding the interesting concept of a man whose own commitment to 250 staff and 600,000 readers was such that he closed down *Today* newspaper overnight insisting on others' loyalty to him, you can only marvel at the speed with which the medium has taken over our sport.

We have now reached the stage where it is television executives who decide how the game should be played, by whom, when and what size the dart-board should be. In deed the quaintest aspect of those glorious *Match of the Seventies* shown during the summer was not the cut of Rodney Marsh's shorts, nor the cut and thrust of Ron Harris's tackling, nor even the half-cut George Best, it was the fact that on neither occasion County won the title but then did any footage exist of their critical, trophy-winning game. It seems inconceivable these days that it could happen: a match of such importance played without the presence of the television cameras. In 1995 Wimbledon couldn't play Coventry on a meaningless Monday night in September without Sky devoting four hours to the event.

cheque has been one of the less edifying sights of the last twelve months. Over the next year or so, Des Lynam is set to become a sort of cathode tube King Lear, presiding over a lost empire, howling against the injustices wrought upon his crumbling authority. Well, as it's Des, perhaps not howling, more wise-cracking.

Not that it is always in a sport's interests to chase the money. Those now selling themselves to the narrow-casting of satellite, or worse, cable, rather than the universality of terrestrial television, should hear in mind the experience of Lennox Lewis. There is a plausible theory that he did not capture the British public's imagination because he fought on Sky, with its limited audience, rather than BBC or ITV. Now Lewis might say he earned his crust and popularity doesn't pay the bills. Except it does, particularly when it comes to exploiting your face commercially after retirement.

The influence television exerts over sport, however, is not limited to control over its practices and practitioners. Our attitude to the big items of sports news in 1995 was almost entirely moulded by whether they were caught on camera or not. The Cantona leap was so compelling mainly because it was so clearly filmed: no cameras were there the day Dixie Dean clipped a lippy fan, thus questions were not asked in Parliament about it. And the riot at Lansdowne Road hung like a cloud in the memory mainly because of the footage. Here were two of the most depressing sights of the sporting year: fascist thugs bent on ugly destruction and Matt Le Tissier trudging off dejectedly when the game was abandoned, never to play again in an England shirt.

It was the filmed evidence that made those incidents so much more dramatic. Would Denis Wise have been acquitted if the taxi driver had closed circuit television coverage of all his fares? Would anyone really have cared that an obscure American tennis player called Jeff Tarango walked off court during Wimbledon had the BBC's lenses not been there to record the every last umpteenth explosive that proceeded? More significantly, is it beyond the bounds of reason to suggest boxing would now be banned had news of the fatal beating of James Murray (and the riot in the crowd that followed) been relayed by film rather than series of smuggy stills?

Which is something Rupert Murdoch understands very well: he who pays the piper plays the tune. And, more importantly, he who has the cameras there gets the news story.

Jim White



ON SATURDAY

There is no doubt that the biggest winner in the sporting world this year has been television. Or rather certain television companies. The manner in which the BBC has been effectively asset-stripped as its major sports have disappeared off in pursuit of a large

## Irish king-makers plan succession

### Football

DAVID HUGHES  
reports from Dublin

In nudging Jack Charlton on his way, the king-makers of Ireland have correctly given themselves time to appoint a successor prior to the World Cup group fixtures' meeting in Luton on 29 January.

However, Monday's PR own goal of the four officers – president Louis Kilcoyne, honorary treasurer Joe Delaney, and the honorary vice-presidents Michael Hyland and Pat Quigley – may see their fellow executives in the 20-man executive council balk at any recommendations for the new manager they make at the next meeting of 12 January. Presented with a *fais accompli*,

they may opt for a compromise candidate, which is exactly how Charlton was elected on Friday night, 7 February, 1986 after receiving three votes out of 18 on the first ballot.

Comparisons with the succession to Maggie Thatcher's throne seem odious, but the equally conservative Charlton has had his pyramidal moments (ask Liam Tuohy, David O'Leary, Liam Brady and Frank Stapleton). If Charlton is Irish football's Thatcher, then Mick McCarthy would seem the obvious John Major in the making.

He has played the political game expertly, remaining in constant contact with FAI executives and the players through regular sorties across the Irish sea. Furthermore, in bringing on Mark Kennedy, Dave Savage and Kenny Cunningham, Frank Stapleton and Liam Brady.

A continental appointment is not as fanciful as it might sound, for there are at least three FAI executives, who would like to bypass the English game in appointing a successor who would also oversee a £5m-plus per annum football school of excellence.

The only tangible legacy of the last 10 years is money in the bank – as much as £7m – generated in the Charlton years. Now is the time to invest some of it in the future.

■ The Football Association yesterday ruled out a re-match between England and the Republic of Ireland in February, a year after the riot at the Dublin friendly between the two countries.

Irish talent at Millwall than Maurice Setters ever did at Irish Under-21 level. McCarthy even comes blessed with Charlton's imprimatur, although he is no clone of the previous leader's long-ball game.

Unbeknown to many within the FAI and the Irish media, the same could be said of Joe Kearns. Despite moulding a more football-oriented and tactically varied style at Wimbledon off equally thin resources, the flawed perception of the Dublin-born son of a Guinness employee is of a Cockney spiv who promotes an even cruder version of Charlton's philosophy.

Also rumoured to be in contention have been Kenny Dalglish, Alex Ferguson and Ron Atkinson as well as a batch of former players such as Kevin Moran, Mark Lawrenson, Frank Stapleton and Liam Brady.

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## FOOTBALL

The year of men behaving badly

22



## RUGBY UNION

Saints face test of faith

19

Not so much all-weather as any weather: Simon Dow's string troop back from their training gallops under a forbidding dawn sky at Epsom yesterday

Photograph: Peter Jay. Racing, page 20

## Premiership scraps foreigner rule

### Football

NICK DUXBURY

**L**ife in football post-Bosman was further confused yesterday when the Premier League freed clubs to play as many European Union nationals as they want. In doing so the League bowed to the European Court's verdict but ran counter to the sport's governing bodies, Fifa and Uefa.

In addition, the move was described as "a knee-jerk reaction" by the Professional Footballers' Association chief executive.

### Souness on the attack

Graeme Souness, the Galatasaray coach, has revealed why Mike Marsh and Barry Venison failed to settle in Turkey following big-money moves in the summer.

The pair were signed along with a third former Liverpool player, Dean Saunders, by their former Anfield manager but both returned to England after just a few months.

Souness admitted that, although the players were greeted with a wild welcome by Galatasaray supporters, things started to go sour very quickly as they were hounded by the media and criticised by fans for their indifferent performances.

"Marsh had to go back. He had difficulties settling into the way of life here," Souness said of the midfielder who then joined Southend in a £500,000 deal. "Venison got himself in-

Gordon Taylor, who predicted chaos within the sport and an influx of foreign players into the country.

The latest developments came after a week after a five-year legal fight by the Belgian player, Jean-Marc Bosman, ended when the European Court ruled that restrictions on transfers and limits on foreigners broke European Union laws on workers' freedom of movement.

With the scrapping of the "three foreigners" rule, Manchester City were set to include four non-British players against

Chelsea at Maine Road today. The decision by the League came after a joint statement by Fifa and Uefa in which they appeared to be prepared to defy the European Court over player limits and transfers.

The European Commission in Brussels responded by insisting that the Court ruling applied immediately and reserving its right to tackle the governing bodies if they stepped out of line.

"The European Court has made a ruling which is directly applicable in the member countries so we would expect the

countries to go along with that court ruling," a spokesman for the EU executive said. "Whether or not the Commission would initiate a [legal] procedure remains to be seen. That's not to be excluded."

In their statement Fifa and Uefa told national associations - some of whom face a collapse of their domestic transfer systems because players can now move for free at the end of their contracts - "not to panic" and that a solution to the crisis could be found.

The Premier League, however, found it had no option but

to implement the law. "We have today advised our clubs that, with immediate effect, the restrictions which govern foreign players can no longer be applied to citizens of the European Union," Rick Parry, the League's chief executive, said. "Clubs are therefore free to play as many European Union nationals as they see fit."

Parry added: "We believe that we are acting sensibly and appropriately. We are aware of the statement issued by Fifa and Uefa. We accept fully that, in the interest of continuity and fairness, competition rules

were not be changed part way through the season. However, our legal advice is clear - rules on EU nationals, even if maintained, cannot be enforced. We will continue to take legal advice on the transfer system."

Manchester City, whose request for permission to field the Dane, Ronnie Etelund, alongside the Germans Elke Inimmel and Uwe Rösler and the Georgian, Giorgi Kinkladze, prompted the European Commission to issue its ruling, said: "We have had today a knee-jerk reaction to the court ruling rather than something arising from discussion and that will cause chaos."

Taylor, the players' union leader, was far less happy. "We fear there could be a flood of imported players into this country," he said. "What we have had today is a knee-jerk reaction to the court ruling rather than something arising from discussion and that will cause chaos."

He stressed that if the Premier League was now rushing to embrace the Bosman verdict, it had to accept the findings wholesale, and not piecemeal. "You can't just have one part of the judgement," he said.

### In the Independent on Boxing Day

Questions and answers  
Complete the sequence:  
16-13, 16-16, 16-19, 19-  
19-22, 22-22...

Who deserved the Pricemont Horse for the knotted sweater?

They probably think I'm on drugs or something.  
Who said this?

Find the answers, and many more brain-teasers, in our Sports Quiz of the Year

### Looking to the future



## Keegan set to stretch Newcastle's lead

GUY HODGSON

Whatever Kevin Keegan wanted for Christmas it is unlikely he would have been so ambitious as to demand a 10-point lead in the Premiership. No matter, the Newcastle United manager might get it anyway.

Should Newcastle win today against Nottingham Forest - and they would be merely continuing the trend of maximum points from their home games - results elsewhere could enable Keegan to carve into his turkey on Monday with the chasing pack barely visible never mind breaking down his neck.

It is a cheerful prospect that would seem more attainable if less obdurate visitors that Forest were on their way. Frank Clark's team spoilt Manchester

United's pristine home record last season and the Uefa Cup this autumn has proved they are more than capable of doing the same at St James' Park.

"It has the hallmark of being one of the best games of the season here," Terry McDermott, Keegan's assistant, said. "Forest like to play football and so do we. Last season we beat them 2-1 here but the game could have gone either way. It's a tough one for us."

Not so tough as for Manchester United who come straight from a thrashing at Anfield to Leeds United.

"The players need to show the kind of passion I expect from a Manchester United team," Alex Ferguson said. "They didn't do it in the first half against Liverpool and it's important they realise the enor-

mity of that failure and put it right against Leeds."

Nicky Butt, whose three-match suspension has coincided with seven dropped points, will return in midfield while Roy Keane might appear as a substitute. Leeds, meanwhile, are likely to recall goalkeeper Mark Beesley for his first match since February 1994, as John Lukic becomes the scapegoat for森林的6-2 demolition at Sheffield Wednesday last week.

Tottenham Hotspur have sur-

prised more than just Arsenal supporters by getting to third place but they could astound further by slipping into second tonight if they accomplish what, on paper, looks to be the non-too-arduous task of defeating Bolton at White Hart Lane.

The Premiership's bottom club have not gained a point

away from home so far although they will be encouraged by the first appearance of their new £1.2m striker, Nathan Blake, and that Spurs may be without Teddy Sheringham who has not trained this week.

Arsenal's penchant for buying centre-backs will be partly explained today when the sus-

pensions of Tony Adams and Steve Bould will allow David Lingham (£1.25m) and Martin Keown (£2m) to form a second-string and expensive, central defence for Arsenal at Liverpool.

The home side, with Jamie Redknapp, Phil Babb and Ian Rush still injured, are unlikely to tinker with a team that took Manchester United to pieces so the former Arsenal midfield player Michael Thomas will make only his third start of the term.

Paul Rideout could return to

Everton's squad for their match at Coventry after recovering from serious facial injuries. The striker, who lost three teeth and needed stitches in four gums after a collision with Sheffield Wednesday's Des Walker, proved his fitness with a goal for the reserves this week.

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Graeme Le Saux out for the rest of the season, which has made their £2.8m signing of Crystal Palace's Chris Coleman last week seem more precarious.

He will make his full debut at Wimbleton although whether he will be a straight replacement for Le Saux at left-back or partner Colin Hendry in his Wales role of centre-half was not revealed.

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SATURDAY 23 DECEMBER 1995



Weekend

## 12 things to do places to go shows to see this Christmas

PLUS:  
FESTIVE FILMS  
THROUGH TO BOXING DAY

### INSIDE STORIES

**3** Running BBC1 is the closest anyone in the media gets to picking the national football team. In both jobs, error incites orgiastic abuse. It's a measure of Alan Yentob's success that not a single tabloid headline has compared him to a vegetable

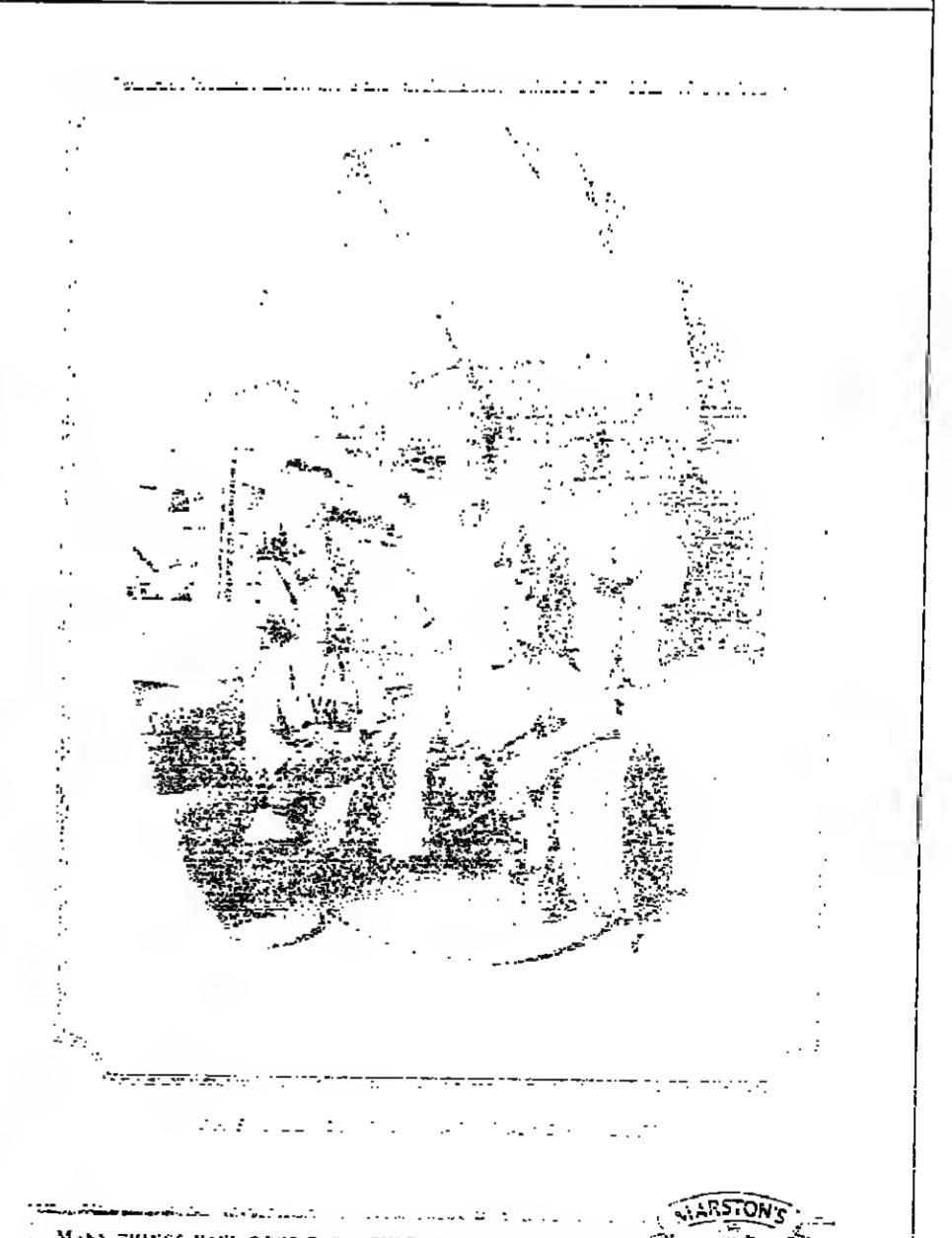
**9** Dickens is surely the world's leading Foodie novelist: you can scarcely flick through 10 consecutive pages without bumping into a steaming veal pie, succulent oysters, slabs of beefsteak, wedding cake or curious fellow that he was - threatened cannibalism

**6** The reason I was in a service station at 11 pm on Christmas Eve deciding whether my mother would prefer the Milk Tray or the wilting pot plant was, according to Dr Joseph R Ferran, because I was consumed by self-loathing. So that's it...

**12** I am no stranger to odd houses: once dated a woman with two kids. But at midnight on Christmas Eve in El Salvador, with the windows shut, the air conditioner on, the TV turned up and the bathroom door closed, I couldn't hear myself sing 'Wild Colonial Boy' in the shower.

PHOTOGRAPH OF THE ENGLISH NATIONAL BALLET'S PRODUCTION OF TALES OF BEATRIX POTTER BY LAURIE LEWIS

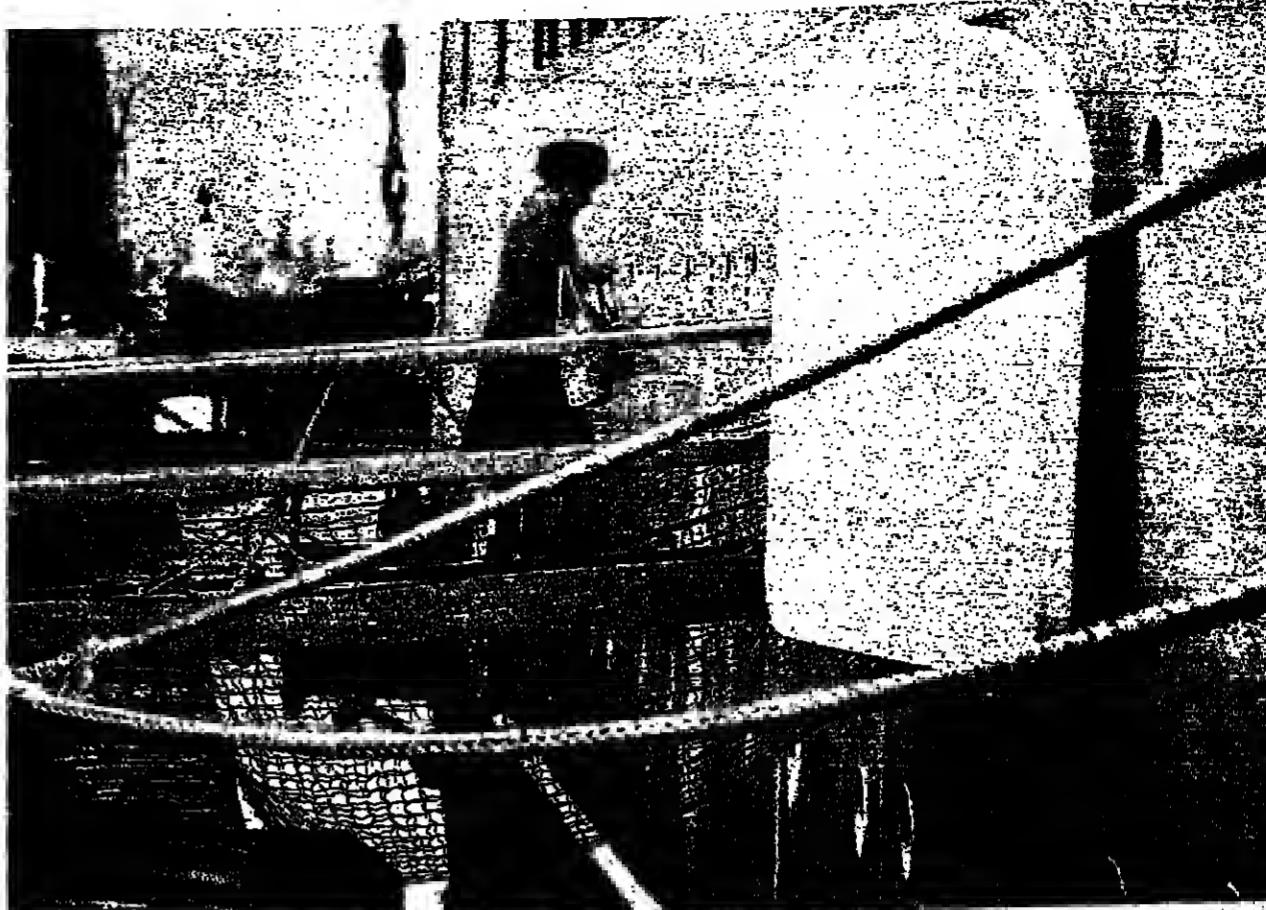
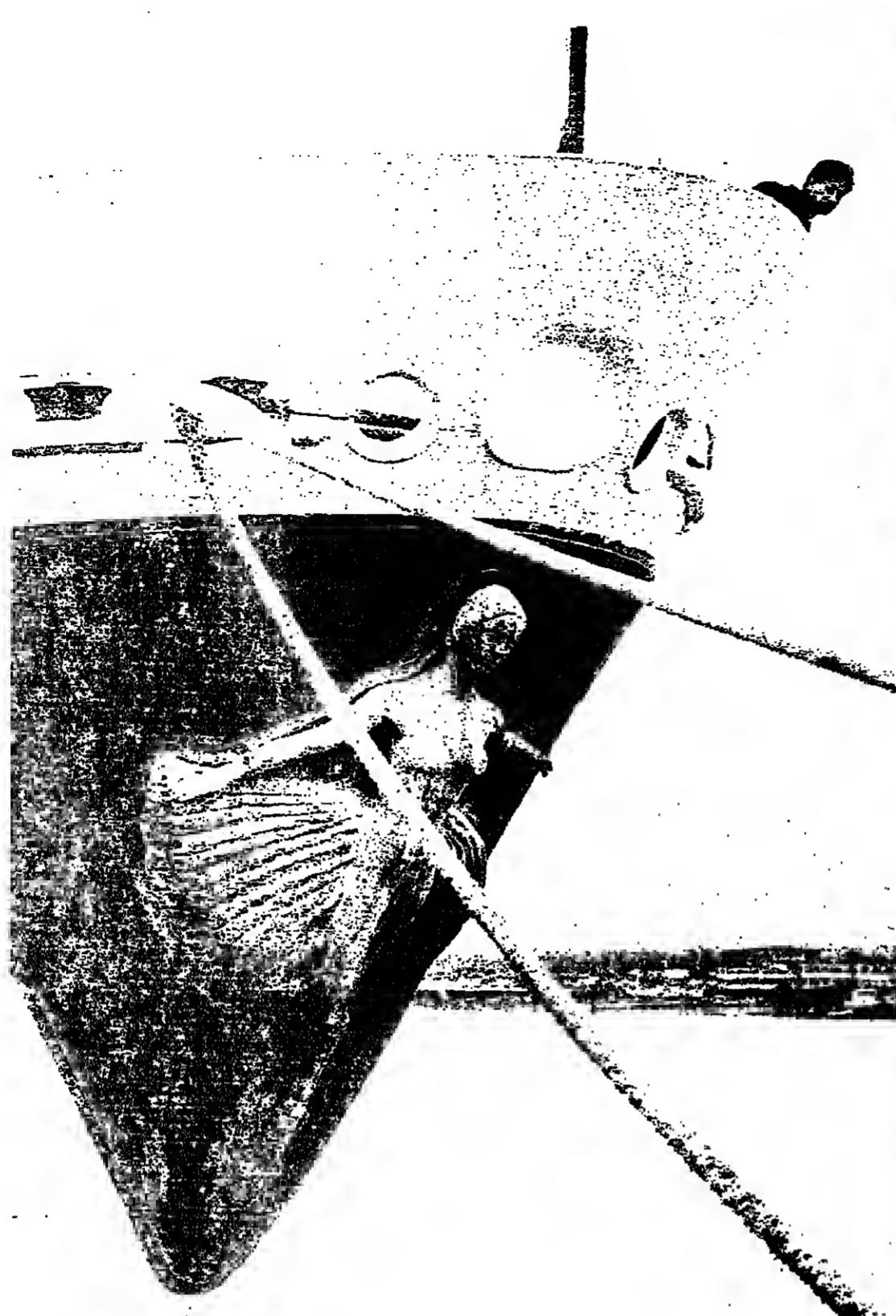
PICTURE STORY	7	BOOKS	8-9	TRAVEL	12-14	TELEVISION AND RADIO	
INTERVIEW	3	COUNTRY	10	MONEY	16-17	TODAY	24
SHOPPING	4-6	PROPERTY		GOING OUT	18-19	CHRISTMAS DAY	22
ARTS	7	GARDENING	11	PASTIMES	21-23	CHRISTMAS EVE	23
						BOXING DAY	24



MANY THINGS HAVE GONE FROM EARTHLY THESE DAYS - BUT THANKFULLY NOT IN BURTON MARSTON'S DESIGNER REVENGE. THE GOLDEN PINT IT WAS IN GOOD OLD JOHN MARSTON'S DAY, BECAUSE IT'S THE ONLY BEER STILL BREWED IN MOLSON'S LAGER. THANK HEAVENS SOME THINGS ARE WHAT THEY USED TO BE



## picture story



Pictures by Glynn Griffiths  
Story by Simon Calder



## CRUISING AWAY FROM IT ALL

**A**t five past five on Wednesday, shoppers enduring a final burst of hyperactivity within the artless confines of Toys 'R' Us were too absorbed with last-minute shopping to notice the steel funnel sliding south along Southampton Water for the last time. "It's a sad event," says Captain Berni Frontin, looking out from the bridge at the line of lanky cranes marching off into the mist. "We've had a good relationship with Southampton." But the vessel's Norwegian owner, Fred Olsen, has decided that the financial and operational advantages of Dover outweigh its traditional loyalty to the Hampshire port. So on Wednesday, the *Black Prince* steamed out of berth 105 and left behind a quarter-century of cruising from Southampton.

For the next two weeks, Captain Frontin will be in legal charge of 450 passengers (mostly British) and 200 crew (Norwegian officers, Thai and Filipino dining staff). The equivalent of a Hampshire village will spend Christmas cruising around the Canary Islands, ending up at Madeira for the New Year's Eve fireworks display.

"Nine times out of 10, if all the relatives come round, it just ends in a big punch-up," says David Middleton, a furniture manufacturer, who is escaping Christmas on his sixth cruise. When he and his family go on board, the staff greet them like long-lost friends. "Southampton's such a disaster zone, with what the council's done or not done, that getting away for Christmas is the finest thing you could do. You don't have to worry about going to church - the church comes to you."

Cliff Comyns, the ship's chaplain, says his 20 years spent ministering to the spiritual needs of the Puras was ideal preparation for cruising. "Life on board is just like the Army. From breakfast until midday, I wander around talking to people, particularly those travelling on their own. In the afternoon, I just sit with intent."

Britain's two biggest tour operators have begun navigating the cruising market: Thomson and Airtours both offer a starting price of £399 for a week in the Med. On

the *Black Prince*, though, the average passenger has paid £1,300 for the Christmas cruise. This buys a modest cabin, with design values dating from the mid-Sixties when the vessel was built: functional furniture draped in turquoise fabric.

"Oh - she's on here, I thought she'd be dead by now." No malice lay behind this casual remark in the Neptune lounge; it merely reflected the fact that the average passenger is aged 68. Some are helped aboard with wheelchairs uncharitably marked "Southampton Cargo Handling". Dr Jim Naysmith is taking time out from heading the medical team at Cardiff rugby club to look after rather more frail charges. "Some people seem to get aboard to get attention - they have access to 24-hour care."

For some repeat customers, the care from dining staff is what counts. Pat and Britt Carne got into maritime mood by taking the ferry across from their home on the Isle of Wight. "They've gone overboard to help us," says Mrs Carne, pausing a smile at her unfortunate nautical metaphor. "We've been sailing on the *Black Prince* since the Sixties, and we have the same table in the same restaurant every time. They even know whether you prefer one cup of tea or two after your meal." Mr Carne recalls the first voyage of the Russian cruise ship *Alexander Pushkin*. "It was bloody awful - they kept the light ale in the deep freeze; we ended up with beer lollipops."

Two first-timers are working a passage to the sun. Mislava and Zrinka Mikelic (pictured at the piano, above centre) are virtuoso sisters from Croatia, invited on board to entertain passengers in the Aquitaine Lounge with classical music. Aged 19 and 21 respectively, the violinist and pianist also handily reduce the average on-board age by a month or two.

David Middleton sums up the pleasure of a floating population delighted to be leaving home - and Southampton. "If you have Christmas at home, the wife's stuck making the dinner while the old man's down the pub. Here, the wife and the old man both go down the pub."



### THIS WEEKEND: WHY NOT...

#### READ A Classic Christmas Crime



Famous as the season of inns, donkeys and Herod, Yuletide is equally notorious for thoughts of matricide, patricide and infanticide. To quell such notions, take a break from Delia's Christmas Countdown, oceans of wrapping paper and tears of hyperactive offspring, and dip into *A Classic Christmas Crime*, edited by Tim Heald. There are 13 stories in the collection, in settings as far-flung as Florida and Yorkshire, each with a seasonal theme (pudding, crackers, charades), the work of a baker's dozen of premier league writers, among them Simon Brett, Peter Lovesey, HRF Keating, Liza Cody and - a rare sighting in story collections - PD James (above), with a teasingly "auto-biographical" mystery, "The Mistresses Murder". Just the thing to absorb, like a box of bitten mint, beside a roaring fire, while you can still stand anything with the word Christmas in the title... Published by Pavilion at £14.99

#### TASTE Whisky Galore!



Remember that delightful Ealing comedy based on Compton Mackenzie's celebrated novel? It is accompanying a spiffing exhibition aboard a magical ship-shaped set with numerous background facts and artefacts to the spirited story. Pride of place goes to a bottle recovered from the SS *Politician*, sunk off the island, only recently liberated from the claws of HM Customs & Excise. You can't swig from that one, but there are free tasting sessions in which to educate your palate to the tune of eight individual Highland malts, and a Christmas Gallery Trail, with a gleaming bottle of the stuff as the star prize.

At the Imperial War Museum, London SE1. Tastings (4pm 27, 28 Dec) must be booked, today only, on 0171-416 5311. The film is at 3pm 27, 28 Dec. Exhibition runs to 28 Jan. Admission £4.10 / £3.10 concs.

#### SEE La Belle et la Bête



Mme Leprince de Beaumont isn't exactly a household name, but in 1757 she wrote a fairytale which has been undergoing a renaissance ever since Disney cast Angela Lansbury to do a voice-over for a singing teapot and cleaned up at the box-office. Marvellous though the cartoon of *Beauty and the Beast* is, it pales beside Cocteau's ravishing film. The simple storytelling is enriched by startlingly beautiful surreal images, while the stunning art direction and photography has inspired everyone up to and including Tim Burton. This unqualified masterpiece now looks better than it has done for 30 years thanks to a luscious new print, full of liquid blacks and whites. Children will fall in love with cinema; adults, too, will gasp with sheer pleasure.

Edinburgh Filmhouse 0131-228 2688 / London NFT 0171-928 3232. Selected release from next week.

#### BUY A Proper Gate



There must be a life beyond fences, thought Robin Maitland, who set up his company Proper Gates to escape from the drudgery of his main occupation as a fencing contractor. Mud, rain, cold, nettles and brambles finally convinced him that at least part of the winter ought to be spent under cover. Now he designs and makes a wide variety of gates for houses, racing stables, churches and schools. He has devised a patent method of incorporating such motifs as cockerels and swans made of marine ply as centrepieces in solidly constructed gates of treated softwood. Other more traditional designs have been copied from the gates of rectories, manors and estates around the 17th-century farm in Shropshire.

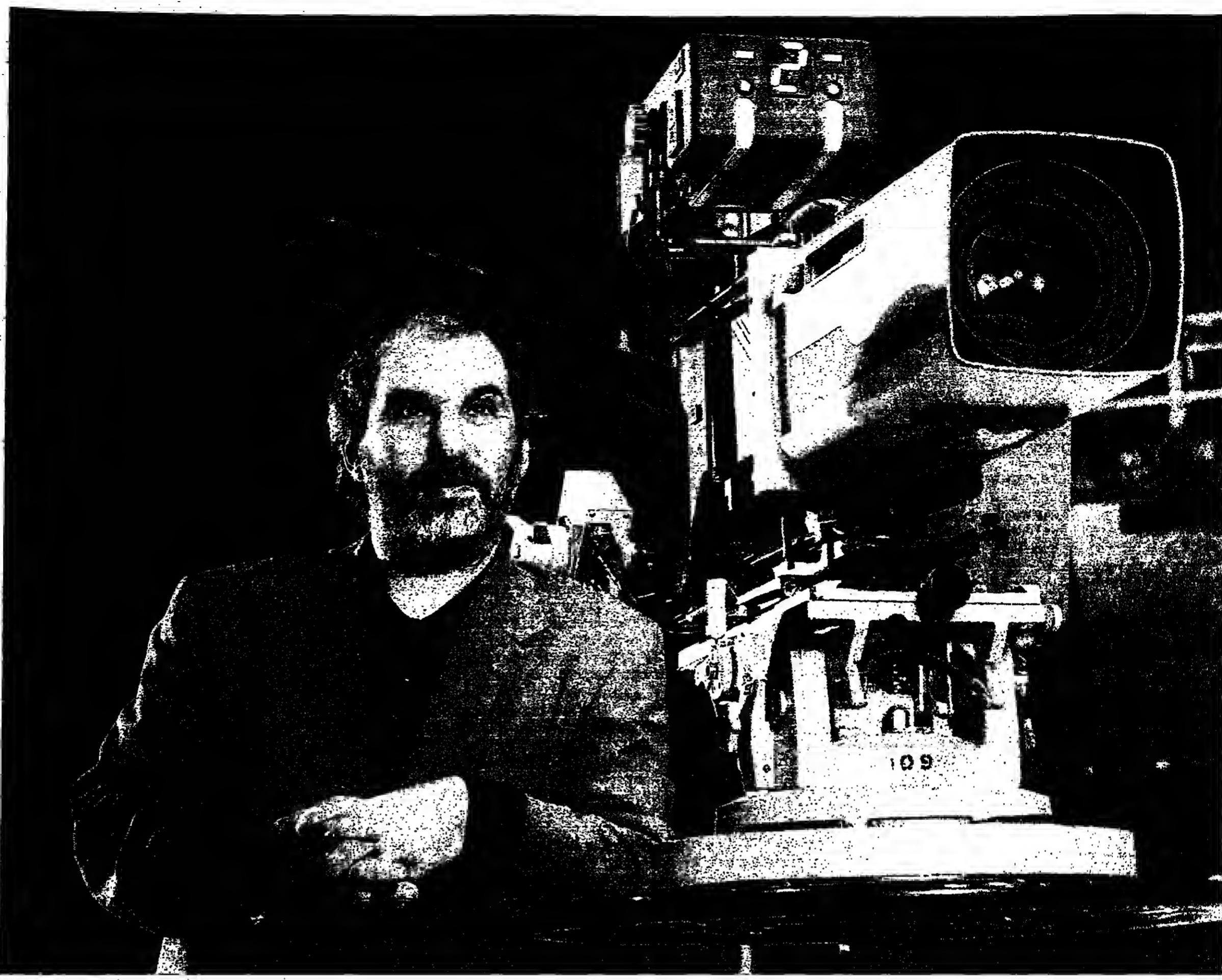
Proper Gates is at Overton Farmhouse, Overton, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 4UD. 01584 877974.

#### KNIT Gromit's Scarf



Learn to knit with Gromit! Being of a generous disposition, our friend has decided to share his superior knowledge of needlecraft with the nation in the form of his very own Knit Kit. Gromit will be convinced by shots of our much-loved and adored Gromit. The kit has everything a craftsman needs, from the rainbow-coloured yarns and needles to an attractive and durable PVC wallet, which also contains *Knitting for Dummies*, an essential guide but need not be taken seriously.

£12.99 available in selected branches of Debenhams, House of Fraser and John Lewis plus www.debenhams.com. Gromit's Scarf can be seen on Saturday 24 December, 10am-12pm, on BBC2.



## The host of Christmas present

Alan Yentob is about to become Santa Claus: As controller of BBC1, it is his job to prepare a carefully wrapped package of programmes for the most captive audience of the year. But does he have the populist touch to deliver the goods? By Jasper Rees. Photograph by Herbie Knott

**O**n the night that 22.8 million people were at home watching *Dianarama*, Alan Yentob went to the opera. The invitation to Hindemith came from Jeremy Isaacs, the director of the Royal Opera House, "who's a friend of mine". The protocol among the bosses of great British cultural institutions is much the same as at head of state level. For this sort of invitation, you just don't plead a prior engagement. But it was perhaps the "difficulty" of the opera that prompted Yentob to issue a proviso with his acceptance. Of course, he had seen it all before, but he told Isaacs that he "really must" watch the BBC's biggest moment of the year live.

Yentob is a great one for seeing how his schedules look on screen as well as on paper, so, to humour him, Isaacs laid on his office. Whereupon Mrs Isaacs, Gillian Widdicombe, let it be known that she too would rather not miss the interview. So did Yentob's partner Philippa Walker. Isaacs, facing a rout, chose to go with the flow. The quartet duly vacated their seats some time before 9.25pm, watched *Dianarama*, toasted the triumph with champagne and returned to their seats for the climax of the opera.

This is the near-perfect Alan Yentob story. For a start, it shows him hand at work, even when out at play. It incorporates some judicious name-dropping, a hit of string-pulling and a splash of superior liquid. It also shows him being ever so slightly cheeky. Above all, it finds enjoyment culture as high as it gets while simultaneously staying in touch with his public. If only Yentob had phoned home to check up on his two young children, the snapshot of a well-connected, domestically and professionally diligent cultural contortionist would have been complete.

He tells this story as he navigates the route between his office, where this interview has been sandwiched (along with sandwiches) into his schedule, to Studio Four. Studio Four, where the photographer awaits, is the place they used to make *That's Life*. Then Yentob axed it before it lost any more viewers. It was through amputations like this that Yentob discovered the bottom line: running BBC1 is the closest anyone in the media can get to picking the national football team. In either job, error incites orgiastic abuse.

The similarity is most apparent at the launch of the BBC's winter season, a lavish affair in the ballroom of the Hilton in Park Lane. (A bit of a homecoming for the boy Yentob, as it happens: his family moved to a mansion block here when he was 12). This is Yentob's quarterly date with the press, and after the odd mixture of actors and hacks have watched the preview tape, the sharp-suited gaffer stands at the centre of a circle of quote-hungry microphones and notebooks and fields questions. "Are you happy about the improved performance of the drama department, Alan?" "What about the big Christmas clash between *EastEnders* and *Coronation Street*?" "Are you pleased you've closed the gap on ITV by a couple of points?"

It's a measure of Yentob's success that in three years not one tabloid headline has compared him with a root vegetable. His most dogged assailant is the former television critic of the *Observer*, who reversed his name to Botney and still coughs up goblets of Swiftian bile into the spittoon that is his column. But Yentob has very few public enemies. This is lucky, because he is extremely sensitive to criticism. If Bobby Robson went grey and Graham Taylor tramped offstage in a fog of bis and others' expletives, you dread to think what national disfavour would do to Yentob.

At this time of year, though it may not know it, the nation looks to him. To all intents and purposes, the controller of BBC1 is Father Christmas, dropping a package of programmes down the chimney that families unwrap together. "It's one of the few occasions of the year," he says, "when you could be getting people just sitting down watching your schedule quite consistently throughout the evening."

Though this appears to be a slice of otherwise typical Yentob paragraph: it starts out with the particular and gradually fans out to include a slightly flabby but warm-hearted tribute to the generosity and idealism of the institution to which Yentob has devoted his entire working life. The modern BBC is somewhere between a church and a business, and these days Yentob's speech patterns are an inevitable reflection of that.)

If Yentob was ever an outsider, nearly 30 years at the Corporation have sucked him so far into the inner sanctum that his ashes will no doubt be scattered there. No career trajectory can ever have been both so orderly. He began his general traineeship in Bush House where, physically clumsy, he braved self-laceration to cut his own tapes. He moved on to Kensington House and started making the witty, ironic documentaries that would land him the stewardship of *Arena*. From running an arts strand, he graduated to an arts department (Music and Arts), to an arts channel (BBC2). Then, three years ago, came the big One.

The nub of the complaint about Yentob's appointment was this: it's one thing to make clever-clever programmes about the cultural significance of the Cortina, quite another to make popular programmes for people who drive Cortinas. "I'm one of the few people to have actually raced a Cortina," says Noel Edmonds, the channel's main dealer in Cortina television, who might have had most cause to fear his appointment. "I think it was very brave of him to take the job. But more than any other controller that I've had contact with, he has managed to make the people in entertainment feel part of the overall BBC. He has just got an extremely human touch. It was an inspired decision."

"I never felt that me and this job were the perfect fit," he says. "I never said, 'It's so obvious. I should be running BBC1.' I'm the answer to popular television." In fact, I said this could be terrible folly. On the other hand, I think that the BBC is a complicated beast, and I have a conviction of what I think it's about. The ideal public service TV as the BBC has seen it historically is a tremendously big and bold and interesting idea. If I felt that people were prepared to trust me to have a go then I thought it was a challenge I couldn't resist."

The reviews for the first year were pretty poor: the second brought improvement. 1995 has been his best yet. OK, so the channel was wounded by loss of the Cup Final, wined when it opted to scupper *Good Morning with Arne and Nick*. But *Dianarama* and *Pride and Prejudice* have fed an appetite for soap in lofy places. *The Private Life of Plants* found Sir David Attenborough scaling new heights and *They Think It's All Over* brightly mutated the game-show format.

The biggest makeover has been in drama. There are still no whoppers to rival ITV's, but

popular series are now holding their own: *Hannish Macbeth*, *Dangerfield*, *Pie in the Sky* and *Roughnecks*. Before Yentob started commissioning drama for BBC2, his only brush with any serious form of thespianism had been when he played the lead in a NUS production of a Max Frisch play that passed through the Garrick Theatre one week when Yentob was 17. True to the type that he would become, he played a chain-smoking intellectual. He was given the dressing room of Margaret Leighton, who left him some flowers and afforded him his first opportunity to drop a famous name.

There are two strands to complaints about drama under Yentob: one is that the commissioning process is over-centralised and that having too many meetings to attend and too many decisions to make. Yentob is indecisive. In the launch video for the Christmas season, Angus Deayton invaded the boss's office to find both in and out trays empty, but the pending tray scraping the ceiling. "That got a huge laugh," says Edmonds. "He tries very hard to please a lot of people and inevitably that can mean that some decision-taking can take a while. I've got a lot of stuff in that pending file. Among the casualties of the dithering has been *Drop the Dead Donkey*, now Channel 4's only good sitcom.

The second complaint was voiced last Christmas by Andrew Davies, who mystifyingly herated Yentob for ordering drama "like rolls of carpet" when he himself was by far the busiest supplier. "If there's more drama in the drama department than there is on the screen," Yentob says now, "then that's because that's the kind of place it is; it's a creative institution." For the winter season, he can boast that there's a lot of new carpeting now in, and some of it looks durable and of quality thread. 1996 looks like another year of solid growth.

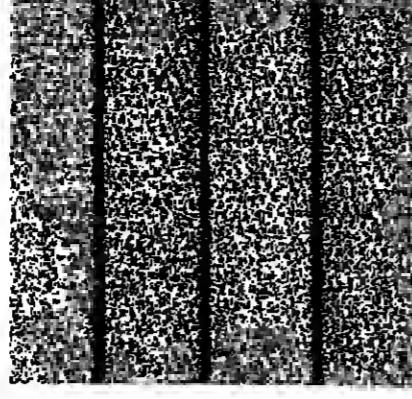
When Yentob applied to the BBC, he used what he calls an Oxbridge interview technique. The theory goes that "you have to feel good about yourself but you have to come out of that room making the person interviewing you feel good about themselves as well". He has not lost his touch. The only question he won't be asked is what he thinks of Jim Davidson. There are limits.

# shopping the sales

## six of the best bargains



**1** The Kinghill Collection: Paddy Campbell suit, down from £411 to £209. This fuchsia tweed suit is a bargain indeed. Kinghill sells designer clothes mail-order, and is selling various things at 50 per cent off in their sale. For example, an ice-blue merino angora Amanda Wakeley cowl neck tunic down from £297 to £148.50 or a Four Seasons parka reduced from £145 to £72.50. For details see below.



**2** Crucial Trading: sisal grass matting down 25 per cent. Carpet looking shabby? Fancy starting the new year with a new floor covering? Crucial Trading has made substantial reductions on its coir, jute and sisal floorings. Trendy seagrass is down 25 per cent, but others have 50 per cent off, including Barley Twist Sisal (now £11.15 per sq m) and Old School Group Coir (now £6.38).



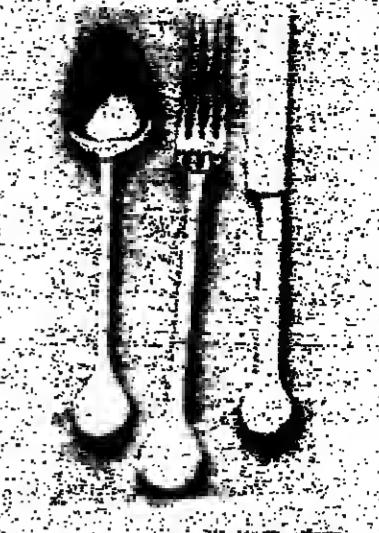
**3** The Conran Shop: Fenice sofa, from £1,555.70 to £775. Not only is The Conran Shop having a regular sale, it is having a two-day warehouse furniture sale on 6 and 7 January, where there will be discounts of 50 per cent and even lower. The store is laying on courtesy buses from the shop to the warehouse in SW16.



**4** Racing Green: men's jacket down from £125 to £59. Racing Green, the classic casuals people, are offering discounts of 30 to 60 per cent on much of their stock. This men's wool/cashmere Doncaster jacket is a particularly good find; women's hacking jackets are also reduced from £15 to £50. Men's brightly coloured corduroy trousers are being reduced from £39 to £25.



**5** Harrods: ostrich tote bag, from £1,250 to £80, and zip-top bag, from £115 to £35. They say "There Is Only One Sale", and they do have a point. Harrods has some terrific bargains. For example: 40 per cent off a Harrods Own Label black single-breasted women's suit; men's single-breasted cashmere coats reduced from £675 to £275; 50 per cent off Harrods silver photo frames. But can you bear the crush?



**6** David Mellor: 20 per cent off cutlery. The smart person's kitchen shop only has one sale a year, and there are some substantial reductions. Up to 50 per cent on assorted slightly damaged kitchen equipment, 20 per cent off some cutlery and 10 per cent off other tools, crockery and glassware. Worth a visit by serious bargain hunters and those who are planning to buy some new special tools anyway.

## SALES GUIDE: WHERE TO FIND WHAT AND WHEN

### WHAT SHOPPERS IN OXFORD STREET WILL BE BUYING IN THE SALES

Neville Bower  
(27)



paper maker from High Wycombe

"I suppose I might go to the sales. If I do, I'll be for clothes but I probably won't come into town specially. I might look at stuff to do with computers though."

Ravin Ranji  
(28)



IT Manager from Lewisham

"I'll definitely go to the sales – I need a video. I know what the prices are and I'm looking for a good one, a Sony or JVC. I'll go to John Lewis, most high-street stores and Selfridges. But I won't be there at the crack of dawn."

Eileen &  
Charlie  
Monteith  
from Pimlico



"We won't be coming up to Oxford Street for the sales – there are too many people. But we do go to the Army & Navy because it's near home. We'll get Christmas cards for next year and perhaps some decorations. But nothing else."

Linda Shanks  
(44)



literary agent from Islington

"I will be going on the 1st of January – probably for my chap's Christmas presents, which will mainly be clothes. I'll go to Liberty and Paul Smith if it's on. I might see what Nicole Farhi has to offer."

Lynda Moylan  
(22)



community artist from Australia

"I'll look for bras, underwear and cosmetics – things that I can't normally afford. I'm usually an Oxfam shopper, but the sales give me an opportunity to get things I can't otherwise have – can you give me any tips on where to go?"

Fred  
Morgans  
(52)



security guard from Camberwell

"I don't know that they are real. Aren't they just a gimmick? Originally, these stores inflate the real price, and the sales prices are just what they should have been in the first place. But I'll probably have a look around."

### DEPARTMENT STORES

Debenhams  
Starts 27 Dec at branches throughout England and Wales. Scottish branches start 26 Dec. 334-348 Oxford Street, London W1 (0171-550 3000). General customer information 0171-408 3333.

Fenwick  
Starts 27 Dec at 63 New Bond Street, London W1 (0171-629 9161) and stores in Brent Cross, Windsor, Leicester, York, Canterbury and Tunbridge Wells. Sale at the large Newcastle branch starts 28 Dec. At Bond Street, Mondi collections will be reduced by 30-50 per cent; Fenn Wright & Manson, Betty Barclay collections by up to 50 per cent, and 30 per cent off Weekend Collections. Recuctions at Brent Cross include up to 50 per cent off French Connection, Jacques Vert and Bianca; 50 per cent off leather handbags and selected jewellery by Monet, Cro and Napier.

Forbnum & Mason  
Sale starts 28 Dec at 181 Piccadilly, London W1 (0171-731 5040).

Harrods  
Smash-and-grab of the year starts 3 Jan at Knightsbridge, London SW1 (0171-730 1334). Reductions of up to half price are offered throughout the store. Account customers receive an additional 10 per cent off their shopping on day one of the sale. The ladies fashion department offers 40 per cent off Harrods Own Label black single-breasted suit, 50 per cent off Frank Usher and 30 per cent off Jasper Conran dress and occasion wear. For men, up to 50 per cent off silk ties, up to 40 per cent off men's knitwear and lambswool and cashmere scarves. Children get 40 per cent off David Charles dresses, 40 per cent off Sally Membery dresses and 30 per cent off Paul Smith. In china and glass, discounts of 50 per cent on Royal Scott 'Merle' hand-cut lead crystal and 55 per cent off Adantis 'Lyric' full lead crystal. All those Christmas movies you've seen will look larger than life on a Sanyo CTV 28" Nicam telly, down from £1,299 to £999. If you live outside London, or can't bear the crowds, Harrods is also offering discounts through its new sale catalogue. For a copy, ring 0800 730123, open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Harvey Nichols  
Starts 27 Dec at 109-125 Knightsbridge, London SW1 (0171-253 5000). The sale is expected to last around three weeks. Account customers get an additional 10 per cent discount on the first four days. Specific bargains are a secret, but expect reductions to be up to 50 per cent off selected items throughout the store.

House of Fraser  
Starts 26 Dec in Scotland; 27 Dec in England and Wales. For store sites, ring 0171-963 2236.

Bargains in the cookshop include 40 per cent off Le Creuset cast iron cookware in American green and burgundy and 50 per cent off Judge satin stainless steel cookware. Over at the homewares department, Drifter goes down duvet duvets (9 tog for spring, autumn and 4.5 tog for summer) are half the recommended retail price at £12. Also half price is Romanique embellished bed linen in cream and white, reduced from £70 to £35.

Chanel  
Clearance sale starts 28 Dec at 278-306 Oxford Street, London W1 (0171-629 7711) at the following branches – Peter Jones, Sloane Square, John Lewis, Bent Cross, Bairbridge, Newcastle, John Lewis, Cheshire, John Lewis, High Wycombe, John Lewis, Aberdeen and John Lewis, Edinburgh. The sale starts 29 Jan at all other branches including Bonds, Norwich; Cole Brothers, Sheffield; John Lewis, Bristol. Savings around the store of up to 50 per cent. Many bargains in furnishing fabrics, including John Lewis own brand Jonelle, and china department. Reductions on Royal Doulton, Royal Albert, Portmeirion and Spode 'Blue' Italian ranges.

Christian Lacroix  
Now on at 8a Sloane Street, London SW1 (0171-235 2400) and 29 Old Bond Street, London W1 (0171-409 1994). Discounts of 30 per cent.

Comme des Garçons  
Sale now on at 59 Brook Street, London W1 (0171-493 1250). Reductions of up to 40 per cent off all remaining men's and women's collections, including Robes de Chambre, Comme des Garçons Tricot and Junya Watanabe.

French Connection  
Now on at 99 Long Acre, London WC2 and branches around the

branches nationwide. Join the hordes sniffing out fabric bargains such as printed Armani silk down from £29.95 to £25, Liberty printed silk from £14.95 to £10 and Liberty Venuta wool from £22 to £15.

Georgina von Etzdorf velvet scarves are down from £95 to £65, English Eccentrics velvet devore scarves from £159 to £109. Liberty print watches with plain faces are reduced from £29.95 to £14.95 and Jean Paul Gaultier jewellery is half price. Pewter-framed mirrors are half price from £59 to £29.

Marks & Spencer  
End-of-season clearance will start 27 Dec at branches nationwide. Enquiries 0171-935 4422.

Selfridges  
Starts 27 Dec at Oxford Street, London W1 (0171-629 1234). Armchair browsers can check out sale bargains in Selfridges Selection mail order catalogue, available now (0800 101101). The first week is Selfridges' busiest of the year. If you choose to join the 85,000 due through the doors on the first day, expect to find discounts from designer labels, furniture, china to carpets. Ladieswear discounts include Max Mara suits from £305 to £152, Betty Jackson jackets from £315 to £157 and Moschino T-shirts down from £49 to £34. 50 per cent off handbags by ONKY, Fendi and Osprey. Menswear discounts include up to 50 per cent off Hugo Boss, Nicole Farhi and YSL. OK by Calvin Klein, 30 per cent off Paul Smith, Giorgio Armani coats and Polo Ralph Lauren.

CLOTHES

Amanda Wakeley  
Starts 5 Jan for about two weeks at 80 Fulham Road, London SW3 (0171-584 4009). Reductions will be 40-80 per cent off, including samples.

Aquascutum  
From 27 Dec at 100 Regent Street, London W1 (0171-734 6090). Reductions of 50-75 per cent of selected items.

Austin Reed \*  
Starts 27 Dec at Regent Street, London W1 (0171-734 6789) and nationwide. Account customers can take advantage of an extra 5 per cent discount on sale prices on the first three days. Selected merchandise discounted by up to 50 per cent including men's wool coats reduced from £279 to £139, wool jackets from £179 to £129. Women's winter coats down from £279 to £139.

Bora  
From 5 January until 27 January, at 434 King's Road, London W3 (0171-352 3697). Good discounts on cashmere and tweed. For example, chunky cable cashmere knits down from £225 to £180, cashmere skinny rib from £150 to £120, tweed jackets from £195 to £145.

Browns  
Starts 4 Jan at 23-27 South Molton Street (0171-491 7833). Donna Karan dark camel one-button fitted jacket reduced from £180 to £60, matching skirt from £425 to £230. Menswear reductions include Browns Own Label soft £570, ladies' wool cashmere hacking jacket down from £15 to £50.

Racing Green  
Starts 27 Dec at 193 Regent Street, London W1 (0171-437 4300), 33 King Street, Manchester (0161-835 2022), Unit F1, Bentall Centre, Kingston-upon-Hull, Yorkshire, (0141-226 4114). A sale catalogue can be obtained from 27 Dec on 0345 331177. Reductions on selected men's and women's classic items of 30-60 per cent. Men's corduroy trousers from £39 to £25 (PW605), ladies' wool cashmere hacking jacket down from £15 to £5.

The Scotch House  
Starts 27 Dec at 2 Brompton Road, Knightsbridge, London SW1, 84-86 Regent Street, London W1, and 64 Buchanan Street, Glasgow. Reductions of 30-40 per cent on good quality cashmere and wool jumpers, for example a gold button cashmere cardigan reduced from £235 to £169. Enquiries on 0171-581 2151.

SHOP  
Now on at Basement, 4 Brewer Street, London W1 (0171-437 1250), 30-50 per cent off Hysteric Glamour, Judy Blame and Gimme 5.

Space NK  
Starts 28 Dec at 11am, 41 Thomas Neal's, Earhart Street, London WC2 (0171-379 7030). 30-40 per cent off design labels and accessories including Clements Ribeiro, Future, Ozeki, Alberto Biani, Soap Studio, Liza Bruce and Fenn Wright & Manson.

Warehouse  
Starts tomorrow at 19-21 Argyl Street, London W1 (0171-437 7101) and branches nationwide. Just in time for last-minute Christmas shopping.

Wealth of Nations  
From 31 January until stocks last. Up to 60 per cent off discontinued stock, for example Irish cord workshirts from £38 to £20. Mail order from Wealth of Nations, Unit 28, The Talina Centre, Bagley Lane, London SW6 2SW (0171-371 5333).

French Connection  
Now on at 99 Long Acre, London WC2 and branches around the

country. General inquiries (0171-580 2507), 30-50 per cent off selected stock.

Herbert Johnson  
Starts 4 Jan at 30 New Bond Street, London W1 (0171-408 1174). Reductions of 50 per cent off couture hats, casual hats 25 per cent off and accessories 30 per cent off. Pull-on felt hat down from £105 to £79. Men's hats reduced by up to 60 per cent, a felt trilby is down from £95 to £60.

Hobbs  
Now on at 17 The Plaza, Covent Garden, London WC2 (0171-936 9168) and branches nationwide. General customer information 0171-586 5550. Buy your party gear at prices discounted by up to 50 per cent. Strappy stilettos are reduced from £59.99 to £29.99, ballerina shoes from £23.99 to £19.99, satin cross-over dress from £64.99 to £32.99, boucle flared dress from £49.99 to £29.99 and leopard skirt down from £49.99 to £29.99.

Joseph  
Starts 27 Dec at 77 Fulham Road, London SW3 (0171-811 9500). Reductions from 30 per cent off. Jones Bootmakers  
Sale starts 27 Dec at branches throughout the country. Enquiry number is 01323-649408.

K Shoes  
Started on 17 December at branches nationwide, will continue well into January. Substantial bargains include £15 off pairs of boots and men's shoes; up to £20 on selected ladies' shoes.

Kingsmill  
This mail-order sale starts 1 Jan. Call 01494 890555. British Designer Collections catalogue £7.50. Diffusion catalogue, £3.50. Phones are staffed from 9am to 7pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 6pm Saturday, Sundays 7am to 14.30-4.30pm. Sale of designer fashions by mail order means you don't need to leave your armchair to hunt bargains. Half price on Paul Costelloe, Nicole Farhi, Jasper Conran, Amanda Wakeley.

Pied à terre  
Starts 27 Dec at 32 Neal Street, London WC2 (0171-240 8148) and branches nationwide. Reductions include court shoes reduced from £79 to £40, pumps £65 to £30 and long boots from £95 to £50.

Ravel  
Starts tomorrow at 184-188 Oxford Street, London W1 and branches nationwide. Mail order and enquiries on 0171-631 0224. Up to 33 per cent off this season's boots, bags and stiletto-heeled shoes.

Red or Dead  
Starts 27 Dec at 1 & 23 Thomas Neal's, Earhart Street, London WC2 (0171-240 5576) and branches nationwide. General inquiries (0171-937 3137). Selected stock reduced by 50 per cent. Sixties-style knee-length nylon boots in gold, black or rust reduced from £120 to £60.

Racing Green  
Starts 27 Dec at 193 Regent Street, London W1 (0171-734 6789) and nationwide. A sale catalogue can be obtained from 27 Dec on 0345 331177. Reductions on selected men's and women's classic items of 30-60 per cent. Men's corduroy trousers from £39 to £25 (PW605), ladies' wool cashmere hacking jacket down from £15 to £5.

Small and Tall Shoe Shop  
Sale of women's shoes in large or small sizes. Sale for large sizes (8 1/2-11 1/2) runs from 27 Dec to 6 Jan. Small sizes (12 1/2-2 1/2) will be reduced from 10 Jan to 20 Jan. 71 York Street, London W1 (0171-723 5321). All current stock will be reduced.

SHOES

B & Q  
Starts Boxing Day at branches nationwide. Blanket reductions on several product lines, including 20 per cent off lightbulbs, a third off discontinued kitchens, 25 per cent off selected lawnmowers, strimmers and hedge trimmers and 20 per cent off house plants. Other bargains include a Country Cottage bathroom suite reduced from £255 to £395 and a Style 400 Shower Heater down from £99.99 to £69.99.

The Conran Shop  
Start

## shopping the sales



## How to spot a really good deal

There are marked-down goods and there are genuine bargains. They are not the same. By Karen Falconer

**D**id you know that when you visit a post-Christmas sale you may be splashing out on specially bought-in merchandise rather than genuinely reduced goods? Surely not. I hear you cry, convinced that the great tradition of bi-annual sales has not entirely given way to the promotional farce we've come to expect for much of the year. Why would so many people queue and fight if there was nothing substantial to be gained?

The truth is that there are bargains to be had in the sales – end-of-season merchandise, discontinued lines, perhaps even loss leaders – but they may be thinner on the rails than you think. Sales originated as a way of getting rid of last season's stock. But with increasingly good stock control systems in the bigger stores, there is less surplus to sell off. However, the January sales have become almost an institution with consumers, so stores have to virtually create bargains to keep them happy.

"Retailers have to provide a feel-good factor for purchases so the consumer can justify it," said Martin Fisher, officer of prices for the Institute of Trading Standards Administration. Sales, he added, together with the enormous signs in shop

windows and hordes of ads shouting about the bargains to be had, are a way of convincing people that they get the best possible deal.

Indeed, for the serious sale shopper, there are seriously good buys to be had. "The people at the front of the queue will have been in the store looking under the brown paper over the previous few days. They will know exactly what they want," said a spokesman for Harrods. "They will have tried on the red Ralph Lauren dress at a 50 per cent mark down and worked out which door is closest to it. The real sale pros will be in and out of the store by 9.10am."

Indeed, most shops offer reductions of up to 50 per cent at the outset of a sale, often increasing the discount as the sale progresses. Fashion is particularly good for reductions as most merchandise cannot be carried over into the new season. In other areas – furnishings, electricals, homewares – markdowns are less dramatic unless the goods are soiled or being discontinued.

"We start planning our sale in October," a Heals' spokeswoman explained. "Normally, our discounts are between 10 and 30 per cent, or 50 per cent if we are trying to clear something. Often, our bargains are



If you want a real bargain, brave the crowds and beware the stack of navy blue jumpers in small, medium and large. Photos: Nicholas Turpin

one-off things, something weird and wonderful, or upholstered that has had 200 people sitting on it."

But, until prices are slashed to about 70 per cent, retailers are still making some profit. A 10 per cent reduction means handsome profit; 50 per cent means a smaller, but still a hefty one, as the original selling price is often around 150 per cent of the wholesale cost, minus overheads.

Genuine sale bargains are only part of today's sale story. As customer footfall increases dramatically (Harrods gets 300,000 people – 10 times its normal amount of shoppers – on the first day of its sale), so

retailers have devised ways to capitalise on this. They buy in merchandise specially for the sales, although how much varies widely from store to store, department to department. It might be slight seconds in glassware or china, end-of-range or unpopular lines in white goods, electricals or audio goods, or bulk-bought jumpers or T-shirts. It's often merchandise offered by manufacturers at a significantly reduced price.

"Bought-in merchandise, which often comes from the Far East, may be lower quality than usual," said Chris Dawson of retail consultancy Management Horizons. "It's

stuff that stores may not be able to stock at full price because of the lesser image."

Mr Fisher puts it more strongly: "I don't feel that the public gets what they think they're getting when they see a sale sign. They expect a real bargain, but products are much more gimped. There will be shops that run sales in the traditional way but they are increasingly the small independents. Companies run by shareholders have to play to the current market rules."

Buying in special goods is the modern-day sales trend; most of the major high-street players now do it. The problem is that many consumers are not able to, or aware of the need to differentiate between a real bargain and what is nothing more than a cheaper product at a cheaper price. In the general mayhem that sales are, they may snap up goods which otherwise they would not have done. However, there are ways to spot the imposters.

A Code of Practice on Sales goods stipulates that they have to be on sale at the full price in the store for at least 28 days during the previous six months. Bought-in merchandise obviously has not been and therefore has to be clearly marked as a "special purchase" item, or as reduced from the recommended

Retail Price (a manufacturer's suggested price which may bear absolutely no relation to what the product could realistically sell for) as opposed to the previous selling price.

There are other tell-tale signs, even without the signing.

"If you have a stack of navy jumpers in small, medium and large," explained Harrods, "it is an indication that you are buying something that has been bought in." Genuine sale goods tend to be one-offs or obscure sizes, or ties with strange prints on them.

It may be that a customer is quite happy to snap up a special purchase product; retailers wouldn't stock them if people didn't buy them. After all, it can be quite handy to purchase a stack of shirts for work, or the extra plates for the kitchen at a cheap price. But, for the genuine bargain hunters, it is worth remembering that most small shops really do have to offload one season's stock before they can buy in the next and, therefore, the markdowns will be on merchandise they actually sold.

For my money, forget 10 per cent discounts: it's half-price bargains on quality goods that I'm after, and, if they're not there, forget it. I'll take my money home again.

## The sensible shopper's sales guide

By Melanie Rickey

Christmas is finally upon us. Phew. Time to sit back, watch some entertaining (if not mind-numbing) reruns of blockbuster movies, eat fancy food, and put the hassle of Christmas shopping behind us.

Or is it? The January sales are just around the corner, and for some avid consumers, the thrill of catching a bargain, or squabbling over the last pair of leather kitten-heeled slingbacks in a size 6, is far too addictive and exciting to pass up.

If you enjoy shopping for clothes and its associated pleasantries, you won't be happy shopping during the sales. Sales staff pay little attention to you, the changing rooms in most stores become communal (if they aren't already), and you may be swayed by the price reduction on a garment rather than whether it suits you or not.

The only way to "do the sales" is to go out with what you want firmly in mind and stick to it. A friend of mine set off one year armed with a newly-acquired credit card and was so impressed by the bargains that "sale mania" set in.

She went up to her limit on sales bargains from the likes of Armani, Nicole Farhi and Whistles. But when she got them home, the Nicole Farhi coat was a bit too long, the Whistles suit the wrong shade of brown, and the Armani dress, just a little too tight around the bust.

All in all, a day of fun turned into a day of disaster, as returning sale goods can be a nightmare. Certain stores offer credit notes or exchange on goods returned – this is the policy of Whistles and Nicole Farhi. Armani will refund at the discretion of the management, but few stores give money back unless the goods are damaged.

My friend was lucky, she wasn't stuck with her impulse buys. So take note: it always works to your advantage to ask the manager of the shop you are buying from about their returns policy.

To do the sales the sensible way, take stock of your wardrobe. Check off how many pairs of trousers you own, how many suits, skirts, shirts, coats, and evening dresses – even shoes and casual wear should come under scrutiny. This done, really think about what you wear on a day to day basis. If more than half of your clothes are defunct, sales therapy should give your wardrobe a face lift.

It is best to look for basics. If you need a few new jumpers, sales are great because knitwear is always generously reduced. Good classic suits are always a good buy, as are winter jackets. Never go for a frivolous impulse buy, like a lime-green through split evening dress, go for what you need. Sales staff are always eager to tell you how many million dollars in something. Remember that the goods on sale are goods the store has been unable to shift thus far.

Three top tips for sales shopping: "If it doesn't feel right, don't buy it, no matter what the sales assistant says.

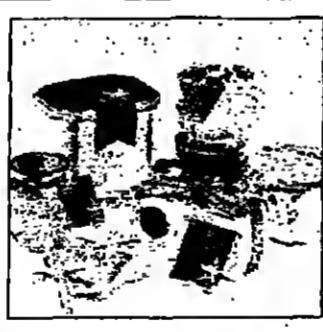
"Check the returns policy of the store before making your purchase.

"Look around. You may buy that near-perfect black polo neck at one store, only to find a better version even cheaper somewhere else.



### Good thing

Boots Fine Foods, from £2.30



In the packaging fest that is Christmas, Boots have done a brave thing. They have wrapped their fine foods – mulled wine set (£2.50), 1lb Christmas pudding with brandy (£4.30) etc – in nothing more than reusable tins and a lick of silver paper or cellophane. In doing so, it has saved 6,000 tonnes of packaging. OK, so their Batman bubble bath is a triumph of plastic over content, but at least they have made an effort. I may even go out and buy a jar of their peach conserve with peach schnapps (£2.30). Purely in the interests of the planet, you understand.

### Checkout The Christmas Chapter

The Christmas Chapter, 162 Sloane Street, London SW1

What is it? An off-shoot of Breeds, the upmarket cutlery and chinaware shop in Tunbridge Wells, The Christmas Chapter is a shrine to Christmas. Well, to Christmas decorations. For the past five years, Breeds has turned over its basement to Christmas decorations. The idea has worked so well that this year it opened three other outlets: Sloane Street, Kingston-upon-Thames and the Lakeside Shopping Centre, Thurrock. They stay open until the end of January.

Atmosphere: Slightly weird. It's like walking into a large picture book in which a forest has invaded a house. The shop is filled with themed and decorated trees, and in one corner, a table is set for a casual Christmas lunch (who doesn't have gold baubles delicately placed among their gold rimmed plates and glasses?). Beware the low-flying decorative objects.

Customers: A mixture of well-heeled locals, awestruck tourists, and the simply curious. Interestingly, there are no children: wise parents leave them elsewhere as one look at all the loot would send them into a frenzy. According to staff, most customers are overwhelmed by the stock.

However, they will help gaping customers to create a theme at home and to make up perfect bows with which to dress presents or decorate your tree.

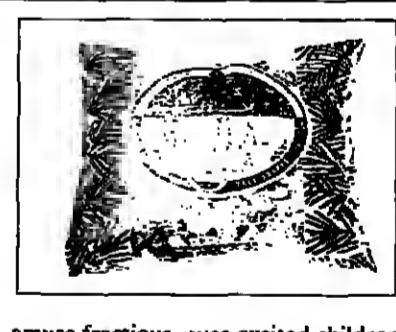
What to buy: The giant golden papier mache angels are a must, if you have room to burn, at £200. Birds with wire feet which twist around the branches of the tree cost £1.95-£4.99 (the white dove is a current best-seller). Bags of glossy red stars or apples £2.95; small teddy bears, rag dolls and soldiers are £3.95 and part of a folk art theme. Patchwork and applique Christmas stockings are £24.95.

Do not buy: Terrifyingly ugly Father Christmas heads which look like they have been pickled — guaranteed to give children nightmares (£1.95).

### Mad thing

Christmas tree pasta shapes, £1.66 per packet

You've read everything you can lay your hands on about how to stage-manage the Christmas meal. You've stuffed the turkey or you're boiling a ham; the bread sauce, red cabbage and God only knows what else are on the go, but you've forgotten something you haven't planned a meal for Christmas Eve. Don't panic. The Funfood Pasta Company has the answer – Christmas tree pasta shapes. Perfect for that last-minute tuna surprise or macaroni cheese. If nothing else, they should



amuse fractious, over-excited children. Stockists: Gill Wing Gift Shop, 194, Upper Street, Islington, London N1. Tel: 01992-632 222 for nearest branch.

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ALWAYS READ THE LABEL

\* Trade Mark

6 shopping

# Two days to go. Presents? Panic!

Why do you always leave your Christmas shopping to the last minute? Is it fear of death? Low self-esteem? Acute procrastination disorder? That's the theory according to one academic. Whatever the reason, Jim White will be present-hunting in the convenience store again this year

**J**oseph R Ferrari, of the Centre for Life Studies, Cazenovia College, New York, has the perfect excuse for not doing his Christmas shopping. "Sorry, honey," he can say. "I was too busy stuck down the Mall researching why people leave their Christmas shopping to the last minute."

In the land where the works of Madonna have inspired a university degree course, and an intimate knowledge of knitting patterns can land you a doctorate, Dr Ferrari's research has the stuff of real scientific rigour about it. "Christmas and procrastination" is the title of his paper. "Explaining the lack of diligence at a real-world task deadline."

Dr Ferrari examined 240 mall shoppers, measuring "procrastination scores (on arousal and avoidance measures), the closeness of the measurement to Christmas, and shoppers' rationales for why they were shopping at that particular time." He reckoned procrastinators were "motivated by arousal from working against a deadline and attributed their lack of diligence to job-related attributes (eg work/business commitment) that compelled them to begin shopping at the last possible opportunity." Or they were motivated by a need to "avoid situations involving threats to self-esteem, attributing their postponed shopping to personal attributes (eg lack of energy, indecisiveness, perceived task aversiveness) reflecting their belief in their own inability."

So there we have it. The reason I was standing, at 11 o'clock on the evening of one Christmas Eve in a motorway service station, deciding whether my mother would prefer the shameful box of Mill Tray in my right hand or the wilting pot plant in my left was because I was consumed by self-loathing. Nothing to do with the 48-hour header from which I had just emerged; nothing to do with the car not starting; nothing to do with working for a man who combined the less generous instincts of Scrooge and Grindgrind in one miserly, misanthropic package of a kind which regards leaving work before five on Christmas Eve as a firing offence.

However, Dr Ferrari does have a point. Since Christmas now begins in the shops the moment the fireworks are put away, there are 50 days in which to



Jim White scans the shelves of Tesco Metro for that special gift

Photograph: Dillon Bryden

organise a buy-round. There must be a reason why so many of us refrain from doing anything at all about it until the last plausible nano-second. Fear of death is my explanation: a postponement of that which we know is inevitable in the misplaced conviction

that the act of putting it off will somehow prevent it happening. But, like the need to throw up after the office party, in the end there is nothing you can do to stop it happening, so you comfort yourself by waiting until the last possible moment.

The lot of the inveterate last-minuter is helped considerably if you have money. Then you can hit the shops like a credit-card fuelled locust, scooping the gaudy off the shelves with a recklessness that will be regretted only when the bill arrives at the month end.

The shopping areas of airports can be very useful in this regard: who, you wonder, as you pass them by for 363 days of the year, would ever want the shamelessly over-priced, offensively pointless items that abound there? The answer is: on Christmas Eve when

you have so far bought precisely nothing, your family and friends. And here of all, the staff will gift wrap them. Last year a colleague bought in the ten-minute window he had at Heathrow before the last Yuletide flight to Belfast: was called, "Santa's sack of gifts: sancy underwear from the Knickerbox franchise, Body Shop smelies, a boy's football shirt, and that stalwart of the procrastinator: booze, lots of it. All was popped on to the credit card, all was scrumptiously wrapped and all was weeping received by grateful relatives, astonished by the thought and attention lavished upon them.

Penury, though, compounds the adrenalin-rush panic of the last-minute. As a student I can remember standing bemused in 24-hour newsagents debating whether the £2.35 in my pocket would best be served buying the girlfriend's parents the Christmas and New Year copy of *The Radio Times*, or a jumbo pack of Juicy Fruit; always bearing in mind it had to stretch to procure presents for mum, dad and two siblings as well. Fortunately, then, I had the foresight to "bag the girlfriend a Salmon-sized bottle of WASH n' GO from the discount chemists already."

There are people who maintain that waiting until the last minute opens up a huge vista of bargain opportunities: that, after five on Christmas Eve, turkey prices tumble to a penny a pound; that Christmas trees are given away; that street traders pay you to take boxes of Santa hats off their hands. But to discover such giveaways requires the kind of organisation and foresight not familiar to the procrastinator: my experience of the last-minute "universe" involves paying the recommended retail price and above.

And this year, thanks to a change in the law, the disorganised have been given an extension to their deferral. For the first time that Christmas Eve has fallen on a Sunday, we have a whole extra shopping day in which to delay. And if, at 5pm, standing in your local Tesco Metro holding with a potted plant, a Dogs '96 calendar and a festive pine car-freshener you are approached by an academic with a clipboard asking you what you are doing, just ask him a question in response: if he's so clever, when does he do his Christmas shopping?

## ...but it's not too late to order a thoughtful gift

By Ann Crookenden

**B**asically, there's now only three-quarters of a shopping day to Christmas. OK, you still have time to make a last-minute dash up the high street, zoom round a motorway service station, or spend half an hour dithering in an off licence, but you are cutting it a bit fine. And, all right, some shops will be opening on Christmas Eve, but do you really want to spend the day in a bad-tempered chase that results in two packs of lavender guest soap and a decorative jar of sun-dried tomatoes?

In any case, the person you've forgotten to buy anything for probably lives 200 miles away. So you've had it. Well, no, not quite. Here are some ways the last-minute shopper can still save face.

### Gifts

**G**lobal Presents Shopping Service will send gifts to addresses in central London up to Christmas Eve. Simply call them up, tell them what kind of thing you want, and they will leaf through their catalogue and find the exact thing. Ideas range from a cashmere scarf from Johnson of Elgin

(£55), a pencil holder made from faux leather book spines (£18), Links teddy bear silver cufflinks (£62), a Wallace & Grommit alarm clock (£26.90), or a Fischer Price Touch and Listen cordless phone for under-threes (£6.99). They also have a good stock of drinks, including liqueurs and malt whisky.

Gift wrapping costs £2 extra, but messages are free. Delivery from £3.95. If you're desperate to send something outside London for Christmas, they can arrange it but it will cost - a lot. Call 0171-731 3000 to place an order or message <http://www.shoplondon.co.uk> on the Internet.

### Flowers

**I**nterflora florists will be running out of Madonna lilies and poinsettias but they should be able to rustle up something. And most of them will deliver on Christmas Eve if you ring early today. If you're lucky, they'll be able to do you a Christmas basket of red carnations, fir and holly (£19.95 to £29.95), a box of 18 Belgian chocolates, gift wrapped with a spray

of flowers (£14.95), a planted basket with cyclamen, ivy etc (from £19.50-£27.50). Failing that, you'll have to make do with a bouquet of whatever they've got left.

If you call the Interflora Freecall number (0500 343434), they will connect you to your nearest Interflora shop. Alternatively, the central Flowerline (01529 454545) will sort out the order for you. Call today, if possible before lunchtime, for Christmas Eve delivery. Or call on Christmas Eve for deliveries from the 27th.

### Hampers

**I**t's also not too late to send a hamper, but only to people in London, unfortunately, if you want it there by Christmas. Basket Express does a tempting range: from the £45 Premier Hamper (Bollinger champagne, Glenmorangie malt whisky, silver-plated serving spoons...) to a chocolate basket decorated with festive ribbons, berries and baubles and filled to the brim with Belgian chocolates (from £30). There's also a Boxing Day Breakfast basket (£59.50) or A Taste of

America, India, Italy or France (from £30). Add your own message. Delivery costs about £7.25. If you want to order something outside London, Basket Express will deliver between Christmas and New Year (£12 delivery). Call/fax them on 0171-289 2636.

### Too late for Christmas week, but there for New Year:

**D**rinks Direct: Call today, and you could have a bottle of vintage Veuve Cliquot on a doorstep anywhere in the country on the 27th. There are 1,500 bottles to choose from, or send one of their gift packs. The Croft & Jenga pack (a 10-year-old port in a box with Jenga the wobbly wooden tower game), would revive flagging festive cheer for £29.99, or the Iona hamper (£25) which includes a 1994 Sauvignon Blanc, a 1993 Petite Sirah, Belgian chocolates, plum pudding, fruit cake, shortbread and more would help restock a post-Christmas larder. You can add your own message. All parcels are sent by courier, costing from £5.99. Call 0800 232221.



**Tesco Direct:** Orders can be placed now for courier deliveries on Thursday 28th. Hampers are sold out, but a range of wines is available, and flowers, too. The "Luxury Bouquet" sounds suitably festive: gyp, chrysanthemums, gerbera, carnations, lilies, orchids, for £23.99. Messages included. Call 0800 403 403, 9am-8pm, or fax 01992 644464. Internet: [telesales@tesco.e-mail.com](mailto:telesales@tesco.e-mail.com)

**Thorntons Chocexpress:** Whizzing a box of truffles round in time for new year might also save your skin. Prices from £9.95 (200g of pralines, truffles and mousse) to £36.95 for the 1370g Continental selection (100 chocolates). There's a charge for wrapping. The drawback here is that all chocolates travel by post, so they should arrive for New Year if you order before the 27th, but there are no guarantees. Call the ChocLine: 01763 241 444.

the thing about...

## Jars of food

**I**magine the wails if the delicatessens started selling kelims: if the corner shop started stocking a line in recycled, hand-blown glassware; if you could buy hand-made, cast-iron hessian-covered sofas at Asda. It would be like straying on to God's territory: warnings of unleashing monsters on to the world would abound in the consumer magazines, pressure groups would rattle out dire warnings about job losses, the Contrans would give interviews showing that the quality would be impaired. Food shops sell food; design shops sell design: that is how it should be.

Except that the design shops don't really see it that way. Every good decorative emporium now has a department - or at the very least a chrome-



Foodie jars: bought by a particular brand urban person who never cooks

plated five-tier shelf - stacked with dinky food to grace your kitchen. Not least about these are the olive products. Perhaps this is related to the peculiar British fear of things Mediterranean - it's not so long, after all, since olive oil was something you bought in tiny bottles from the chemist to clear your earwax - but things you would expect to find in any old Italian village shop turn up here as luxury designer goods at luxury designer prices. It is in these outlets that you will find your unsulfited olive oil with a twig or tarragon or bunch of chilli peppers bobbing around the bottom of it and a glorious Tuscan sunset on the label.

Safeway may have caught up with pesto and dried tomatoes, but they have a long way to go before they stock foodie jars: bought by a particular brand urban person who never cooks

Country Living, also have bunches of dried herbs and copper pans hanging on old laundry racks suspended from the kitchen ceiling. "Look!" proclaims their interior decor. "I am a busy person and a wealthy one, but really I long for the simple things in life: fresh fruit shared with friends, a bowl of pasta with pine kernels, the smell of new-baked bread..."

My theory is that they are bought by that particular urban brand of person who never cooks, but who likes to keep a decorative kitchen nonetheless. The type of people who have other people in for drinks before going out to a restaurant.

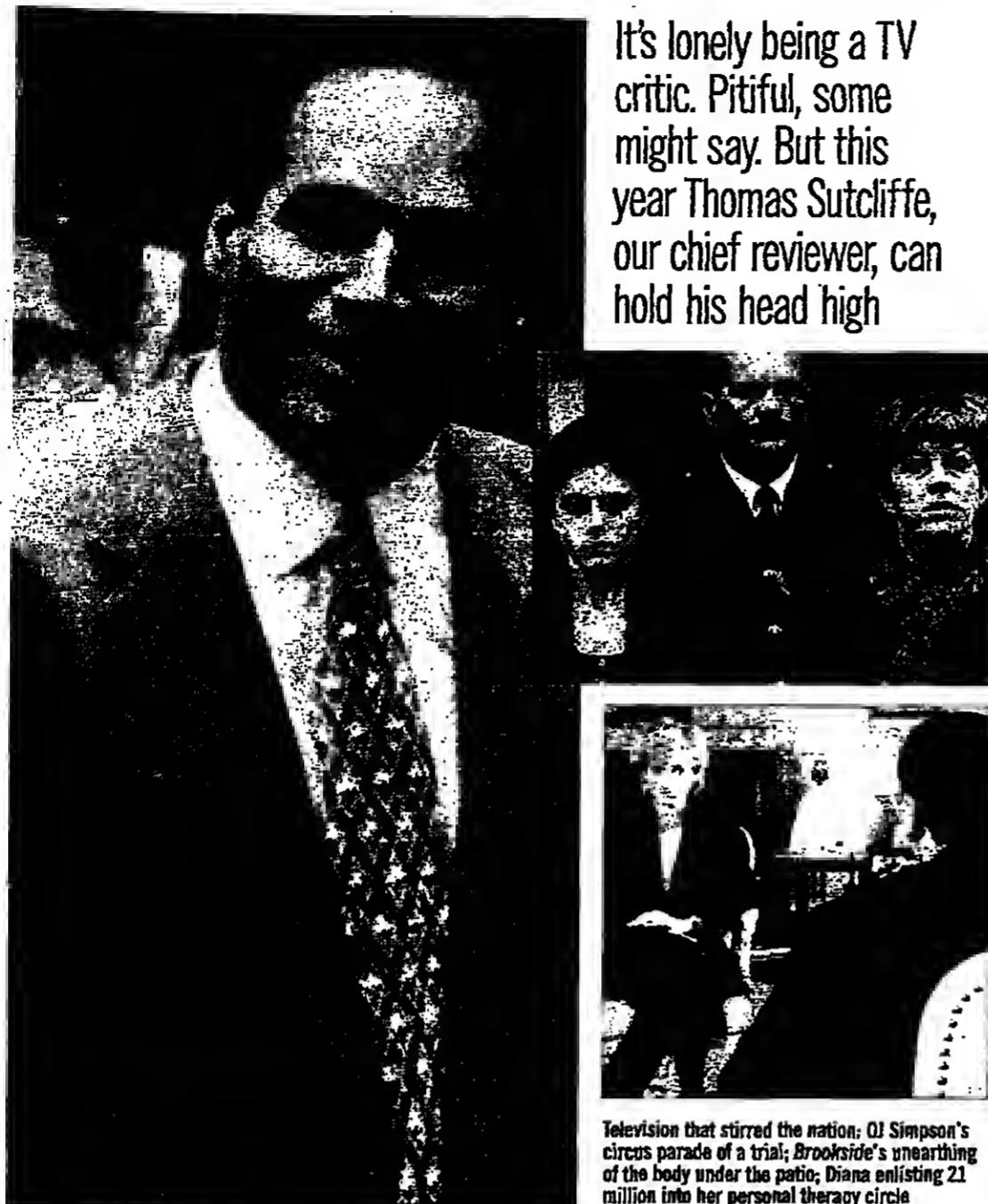
These people, who nurture a secret longing to have their house appear in

rare that these beauties get eaten at their best, when they're still fresh. As for the marinating jars, they'll sit casually on a side somewhere until the next party, when the local dips spoons them, cries "Ah, olives!" and pops the seal on the top.

Of course, they also make great non-controversial presents. Presents to give to the unexpected guest that no-one warned you about. Gifts to take to partners' mothers. Gifts that say that you're a person of good taste and the recipient is a person of culinary discernment. This is a good time of year for sales of tarty oils, as it is a good time for posh soap. After all, both are better than a pair of socks.

Serena Mackesy

# It's OK, admit it, you were watching television



It's lonely being a TV critic. Pitiful, some might say. But this year Thomas Sutcliffe, our chief reviewer, can hold his head high

Television that stirred the nation: QJ Simpson's circus parade of a trial; Brookside's unearthing of the body under the patio; Diana enlisting 21 million into her personal therapy circle

Watching television has never been an entirely respectable activity. As a television critic this is borne in upon you with particular force, because of the gloomy knowledge that the activity to which you devote a large portion of your waking hours constitutes, for many people, a simple shorthand for mental vacuity. Two recent examples come to mind. The first occurred in the context of an industrial accident hearing, considering compensation for a man who had a red-hot metal bar lodged in his brain (he was forced to pull it out himself, a grisly scene which we can no doubt look forward to seeing reconstructed on 999). His lawyer argued that before the accident his client had been a useful member of society, a figure of ambition and drive; now, he told the court, silk handkerchief dabbing at his eyes, the poor man was reduced to watching television all day. The second turned up in this week's television profile of the comedian Peter Cook, a man who began with smart London society at his feet and finished by amassing an unmatched knowledge of obscure cable channels. It was one thing to appear on had television programmes, it was suggested, quite another thing to watch them. The glowing membrane of the screen effects a moral osmosis, sucking merit from those who merely watch and transferring it to the glittering creatures who are watched.

As a model for a working life you can understand that this isn't particularly appealing – a choice between sad disability or a sad dissipation of talent. So you may suspect that my motives aren't entirely pure when I try to persuade you that the past year's television has been unusually provoking. Bear with me though, because this is not an argument about quality, more a suggestion that this was a year in which television powerfully reminded us of its ability to stir people in mass, an ability that video and satellite have already begun to blur. We were reminded more than once that television may be the closest thing we have to that fabled and elusive textile – the fabric of the nation.

Sometimes this was so in a rather literal sense. When Princess Diana chose to enlist 21 million people to her personal

therapy circle, she not only broke with royal convention but also raised serious constitutional issues about the future of the monarchy. Those watching did so for a huge range of motives – prurience, trepidation, gleeful republicanism, mournful fealty – but the effect of that transmission was of a moment of national attentiveness. I looked out from the Canary Wharf tower as the programme was broadcast and I don't think I was simply being fanciful in detecting an unusual lightness to the traffic that night. In television histories the Queen's Coronation is usually offered as the first great occasion of cathode-ray communion, so it's intriguing to note that, more than 40 years on, almost exactly the same number of people watched Diana strip off the dignity of monarchy as watched Elizabeth assume it in 1953. "Did you see it?" people said in the confidence that there could be little doubt what "it" was.

Such moments are rare these days – but that wasn't the only occasion in 1995 when television forced people to abandon their own timetables for those of the broadcasters. Even in Britain, the end of the OJ trial made office workers huddle round the nearest screen, arrested by the pay-off to the year's most extended soap storyline. Even in Britain, largely protected from the twitish derangement of round-the-clock coverage, the arrival of the verdict was a moment of signal drama, which left more than a few viewers feeling shaken in a way they couldn't quite account for. The clichéd phrase about "all eyes being on you" came close to a dull statement of the facts.

For many commentators, the real guilty party in the end was television itself, culpable of transforming justice into a game-show, sullying the truth by mounting a shameless auction for pieces of it. I was less convinced myself – the great revelation of the Simpson trial (made unignorable by the circus parade that surrounded it) may have been unpalatable but it was also overdue. A crack had been widening in the national foundations and suddenly someone threw open the cellar door and let the light in.

I'm not fanciful enough to believe that American television will do much to make good the damage, but it is inaccurate to see it as causing it in the first place. What's more, though television proved an efficient conductor of base motives and crude prejudices, it also provided its own antidote. There was a certain oddity in the sight of broadsheet papers, perfectly happy to summarise coverage themselves, inveighing against the pernicious misrepresentation of broadcasting, the evidence in its tedious, pernickety entirety.

Nothing else in the year could hope to match the intensity of those two television moments – though there were other interviews and other trials that commanded our conversations. In June, Mrs Thatcher gave an audience to David Frost, reminding us of her ability to swoop instantly from beatific condescension to low junk-yard growl. She would not be returning, she said, unless her country called for her, the Maid of Grantham, in some great national emergency. The words came out soft and husky, stroking the interviewer as if he had an aching fur and was curled up in her lap. Earlier in the year, *Brookside* had finally bowed to the physics of patio hailing – the infallible rule that what goes down must come up – and disinterred Trevor Jordache in a five-episode special that ran every night of the week. It was one of those storylines that make a spark leap between life and fiction, like the sudden jolt of tinfoil on a filling – women's groups demonstrated outside the offices of Merseyside Television, the production company which makes *Brookside*, and battered women wrote in their hundreds to the actress who plays Mandy Jordache.

There was much else that was memorable in the year, of course – dramas such as *Jake's Progress* and *Les Blair's Bliss*, a remarkably consistent run of observational documentaries from *Modern Times*, excellent one-off comedies from Andy Hamilton and the distinguished historical journalism of *The Death of Yugoslavia*. But where those programmes set people talking, they did so in small parishes of the national consciousness, parishes bounded by class or occupation. There are times when television can break those barriers, times when watching television isn't so much a sad demonstration of inadequacy but a participation in a national gathering.

## reviews

### TELEVISION Farm Fantasia (C4)

Four legs good, two legs dreadful. Jasper Rees cringes on behalf of humanity at a 'multi species' *Sleeping Beauty*

**A**s a critic, you are often castigated for mocking too quickly. Occasionally, though, you're given very little room for manoeuvre. When a documentary about a ballet starring farmyard animals crops up, it's a case of mock or be mocked. And for once, you can mock with a conscience cleared by the fact that the target, an animal behaviourist, eco-farmer and full-time fruitcake, has a hide of reinforced rhinoceros.

*Farm Fantasia* snooted at preparations for the performance of a "multi-species" *Sleeping Beauty* on a farm near Dartmoor.

The good fairy was played by a sparrow tunicated in tinsel. Sundry llamas pranced about in something approximating to unison. A pair of horses lay down and went to sleep, apparently as instructed but possibly making a valid and spontaneous critique. A monstrous bull called Castor, so named presumably because of the size of his pollux, played the king. And a couple of humans were roped in from the professional dance world, doubtless lured by the prospect of

television exposure from which, it transpires, their careers may never recover.

Their choreographer was Marthe Kiley-Worthington, who lavished all her directorial ingenuity on the quadruped performers and slung comically vague instructions at their two-legged colleagues: "Now you lie down, or a lift or something." The word "eccentric", conveniently used on these occasions, is pitifully inadequate when it comes to describing her ideas about encouraging animals to express themselves. Her plan is to engender an art-form that the more professionally minded will take up.

They say that no man is an island, but meet a woman who is. She inhabits a kind of boggy paradise that she has both imagined and subdued, where man, animal and machine do the work, while woman devises dance steps for Andean pack-mammals. Marthe by name, her nature is to make others martyrs to her art.

Such machinery as there was on the farm was mostly prefabricated. The straw for a new thatch was threshed by a burdy-

gurdy that was less Heath Robinson and more Robinson Crusoe. There was a tractor, but Mrs Kiley-Worthington confessed that she had avoided learning to operate it. This chore fell to her partner Chris. Your fairly standard loony long-beard, he was a comparatively earthbound onlooker who moaned blearily, "Why's it always the bloke who has to drive the tractor?" Some stereotyped roles in this particular animal kingdom are clearly immutable.

The voice-over tried to keep a straight face, but couldn't quite mask a snigger. As the film quietly pointed out, through images of sheep being shepherded and cattle being herded, it's not possible for humankind to choreograph large groups of animals without roping in Tchaikovsky. If the well of human knowledge has been enlarged by this daffy project in one indisputable way, it is because that hole in the dictionary where the collective noun for a group of llamas should be has now been filled. For future reference, it's a *corps de llamas*.

### CLASSICAL Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment (QEII, London)

Adrian Jack listens with fresh ears to a trio of 150-year-old scores brought back to new life by the sound of period instruments

**F**ranc Berwald's *Sinfonie singulière* fused to be heard quite often on the radio, but Wednesday night offered a rare concert performance, in which Paavo Järvi, son of Neeme, conducted the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. All the music in the programme belonged to the 1840s. Berwald was born in Stockholm, the year before Schubert, though he outlived him by 40 years. His *Sinfonie singulière* has a lot of the breezy classical radiance of Schubert's earlier symphonies without their tunefulness. In the first movement, there's also a brief blaze of woodwind and brass that hints at a less extravagant Berlioz; more fancifully speaking, it has an open-air quality that pre-echoes Carl Nielsen.

Berwald's orchestration is very clear, and though there's an elusive, understated quality about his actual invention, his musical argument is lucid, sometimes highlighted by abrupt little motifs like punctuation marks. The symphony's middle movement is a Scherzo with an extended slow introduction and epilogue, deftly devised. Singular it certainly is – Berwald seems to have been happily free of the post-Beethoven inferiority complex – and the music sounded marvellously fresh on period instruments.

It wasn't so easy to create the same sense of newness in Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto*. The soloist, Thomas Zehetmair, evidently wanted a more rugged approach than usual and tugged at phrases rather wilfully – Mendelssohn's fully composed cadenza in the first movement became almost unrecognisable. Both soloist and conductor pushed the central *Andante* rather ungracefully along, while the normally skittering finale was a bit on the slow side and trotted rather tamely. Not a complete success, but at least this unsuave performance made you listen.

But with Schumann's Second Symphony, after the interval, Järvi levelled up the score. All Schumann's symphonies have been greatly underrated by critical convention, and the Second particularly so. Wednesday's lucid perfor-

mance, with straight, valveless trumpets that looked a hit like giant safety-pins, and really woody-sounding woodwind, as well as light kettle-drums played with hard sticks, proved that there is nothing wrong with Schumann's much-maligned orchestration.

My only misgiving concerned a lack of definition in some important cellos lines in the first movement, at least as played here. And really, the orchestra did not need to shatter the atmosphere with a burst of noisy tuning before the Scherzo second movement. In the first of its two trio sections, Järvi controlled the fluctuating speeds with particular aplomb, and far more decisively than usual. The woodwind came into their own in the relay of little solos Schumann gives them in the glorious slow movement – rather analytical-sounding in this performance. Oddly enough in the finale, the first clarinet, sailing in with its inspirational new phrase, was a bit too quiet; but otherwise, there was nothing wanting in the sense of Schumann's hard-won triumph.

STUART MORRIS

THE WEEK IN REVIEW  
David Benedict

THE COMEDY  
PRIVATES ON PARADE

overview

critical view

on view

our view

THE FILM  
ACE VENTURA 2: WHEN NATURE CALLS

At every possible cinema near you this Christmas.

Adam Mars-Jones didn't mince words. "Worth 90 minutes of your time? No." He was not alone. "Strangely, mirthless," said the *Guardian*. "Mean-spirited," agreed the *Times*. "Inane, indulgent... as infantile, unoriginal, and depressingly crass as its title. Two pre-teen boys sitting behind me at the press screening soon subsided into bored silence. The absolute pits," declared *Time Out*.

THE GIG  
SIMPLY RED

Big hits, big tours, big money: 10 years on from their first single, high-pitched Mick Hucknall and the lads are selling albums by the lorryload and showing little sign of wear and tear.

Glyn Brown felt that "Mick Hucknall on his present form is hard to beat." "One of the best bands to infiltrate a British stage this year... A must-see for fans. Simply Red – the band and the man – are on devastating form," cheered the *Times*. "Love him or loathe him, it has to be said that when Mick, Hucknall puts on a show, he does it in style," approved the *Telegraph*.

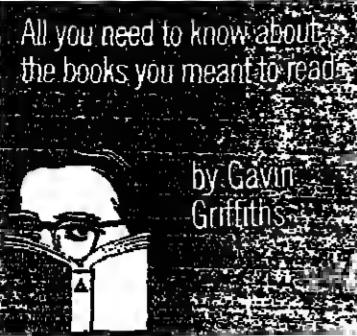
THE PLAY  
TRAINSPOTTING

Irvine Welsh's novel about the highs and lows of Scottish junkies, dramatised and directed by Harry Gibson who turned it into a sell-out on a UK tour and won cult status at the Edinburgh Festival.

Adrian Turpin found the acting "faultless" and the play "almost shockingly light-hearted" yet "something less than a fully realised play". "Without the empathy and enlightenment that drama can uniquely provide," agreed the *Guardian*. "One of the most remarkable productions of the year," announced the *Telegraph*. "A thrilling, poignant, dazzlingly acted affair," cheered *Time Out*.

At the Ambassadors Theatre, London WC2 (0171-836 6111) to 27 Jan.

Not for the squeamish. The makers of *Shallow Grave* have filmed it for release in January. Will it be the same as actually witnessing it live?



This week:

**A CHRISTMAS CAROL (1843)**  
by Charles Dickens

**Plot:** With Scrooge, Dickens moulded a figure of mythic proportions; he also put the finishing touches to the modern concept of Christmas as a cosy exhibition of communal gluttony.

It is Christmas Eve. Scrooge loves money and hates people; he rejects the friendship of his nephew and refuses charity to the poor. "Softhy as an oyster", he wants to be left alone, believing social responsibility ends with the payment of taxes.

The ghost of his dead business partner appears to him; Marley is compelled to wander the earth, chained to the boxes of cash that he had forged in life; his punishment is that he is helpless to relieve the human suffering around him. If Scrooge is to evade a similar fate, he must follow the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future who are to lead him to self-knowledge.

Christmas Past shows Scrooge to have been a neglected child; this results in an inability to love as an adult. Scrooge turns away from the affections of a young woman who subsequently marries and has dozens of children. The joys of family life are not to be his.

Christmas Present offers a panoramic vision of Christmas celebrated across the country, from lighthouse keepers to Scrooge's clerk Bob Cratchit, his wife, and litter of little Cratchits, including Tiny Tim. Finally Scrooge is exposed to the terrifying allegorical children, Ignorance and Want.

Christmas Future puts Scrooge onto the trail of a mysterious stranger who has utterly reviled life and is now treated with contempt in death. His weather-beaten gravestone stands unmourned; on it is carved "Ebeneezer Scrooge". As Scrooge reads his future, he faints.

He wakes up. It is only Christmas morning. A changed character, Scrooge becomes a merry old gent with a twinkle in his eye, dispensing money and mirth with equal liberality.

**Theme:** The individual is personally responsible for fighting social wrongs. It is not enough to pay taxes and hope that a new Law and Order bill will send the troublesome poor to prison.

Christmas Day is a gesture of hope; for one day of the year, family and friends come together and eat, drink and dance to demonstrate how enjoyable life can be. Sensuality and spirituality need not be perpetual antagonists.

**Style:** A unique combination of ghost story, fairy tale, allegory and bitter social commentary yoked together by the poetry of the grotesque: Marley's ghostly face glows "like a bad lobster in a dark cellar"; Mrs Fezziwig's calves, when dancing, "shone like minnows".

**Chief strengths:** This book is a masterpiece of compression. In a few lines Scrooge is established as a monster who dares to articulate the repressed spitefulness of Everyone; "every idiot who goes about with Merry Christmas on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding and buried with a stake of holly through his breast." The sentiments may be repulsive, but Scrooge's pungent humour is attractive.

**Chief weakness:** Dickens tries too hard to squeeze the tear-drops; it takes a strong constitution to stomach Tiny Tim.

**What they thought of it then:** 6,000 copies were sold in a trice and it was described as a "national delight"; on the strength of one reading, Carlyle nipped out and bought a turkey.

**What we think of it now:** Much read but largely underrated. The weirdness of the story is usually forgotten, displaced by accusations of sentimentalism. In fact, Dickens holds the unique mixture in magical suspension.

**Responsible for:** Numerous adaptations, including Disney's version where Donald Duck plays Scrooge, Mickey Mouse, Cratchit. This tumbling together of Victorian and contemporary cultural icons should excite the Barthes division of the postmodernist brigade.

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# The magical age of knights and dragons

Jan Morris salutes her fellow Welsh patriot, the medieval rebel, Owain Glyn Dwr

**The Revolt of Owain Glyn Dwr** by R.R.Davies, Oxford, £20

In 1951, Oxford University Press published a book about the 14th-century Welsh rebel Owain Glyn Dwr which has remained the classic work on the subject to this day. Its author was Professor J.E.Lloyd, the most eminent Welsh historian of the time, who was impelled in his work, so the D.N.B. tells us, by "a robust national feeling". The book was 181 pages long, was printed in generous type on hand-some paper, and was instinct with old-school Welsh pride, plus perhaps a touch of the grand – if sometimes windy – enthusiasm that we like to call *hwyd*. Glyn Dwr, said its concluding line, "may with propriety be called the father of modern Welsh nationalism", and Professor Lloyd's book has been beloved of Welsh patriots ever since.

Sixty-four years later, here comes Oxford with its successor at last, written by the Chichele Professor of Medieval History at All Souls. What a difference! Professor Davies's work is more than twice as long and in a type-face half the size. It is empowered by all the resources of modern scholarship, and is testimony to the transformation that has overcome Welsh historiography in the past half-century. No robust national bias here. This is history at its most professional, thorough and disinterested.

Davies, who is until recently Professor of Modern History at Aberystwyth, has already written famously about the Wales of Glyn Dwr's time, but he admits that like Lloyd before him he has discovered no new evidence about the rebel as a man. In particular, it remains an enigma where and how far, as we would say, if Glyn Dwr died, after the decade of his rebellion against English rule. But what this book does is to set the familiar story in an altogether new richness of

context, placing medieval Wales itself in its proper relationship with England and with Europe. Davies's range of knowledge and reference is astonishing, his detailed examples (life in Kidwelly, the most eminent Welsh historian of the time, who was impelled in his work, so the D.N.B. tells us, by "a robust national feeling").

The book opens imaginatively with two fanciful journeys through 14th-century Wales. The first is made by an official of the King's administration, passing from one outpost of the English Establishment to another, mostly on the coast; the second is made by a professional Welsh poet moving among the semi-private, half-parallels society of the indigenous Welsh, mostly in the back-country. So different are their two excursions, passing among such alien societies, that they might almost be happening in separate countries, yet their routes never diverge by many miles; and this juxtaposition of conqueror and conquered, sometimes overlapping, sometimes just rubbing along, sometimes resentful, sometimes actually hostile, is the key to the whole story.

Glyn Dwr himself was English-educated, and had fought for the King of England against the Scots. Many Welsh leaders opposed him. He had English allies and lieutenants. Yet by the time his rebellion petered out, it was generally recognized as being a war between the Welsh and the English. Glyn Dwr had succeeded in coalescing the disoriented conglomerate of traditional loyalties that was Welsh Wales into something like a true sovereignty. Relations between the two peoples had been shattered, severe racial laws had been introduced in reprisal by the Eng-

lish, and it might well be said, though Professor Davies doesn't, that things in Wales were never to be the same again.

Davies tells us clearly how all this came about – the combination of conspiratorial politics, dynastic pretensions, vatic mysticism, guerrilla skill, nationalist vision and undoubtedly personal charisma which enabled Glyn Dwr to establish such an ascendancy over his volatile compatriots, and to polarize their emotions. We learn about his lofty aims – national self-rule, of course, national universities, ecclesiastical autonomy. We hear about all the skimples-scambles stuff that Shakespeare's Hotspur mocked, immemorial prophecies, portentous folk-lore, dragons and mordwars too. And there is a splendid epilogue in which Professor Davies pulls it all together, the legacy of the fighting, the effects of the rising upon the subsequent history of Wales, Glyn Dwr's elevation into mythical status and his recreation as a nationalist champion.

It is not revisionary or debunking history, but it is a world away from Lloyd's little book of long ago. It is a wonderfully learned and enlightened survey of one corner of Europe at a particularly significant moment of its history. But as a Welshman himself – and from Glyn Dwr's own part of the country, too – Professor Rees will forgive me, I know, if I say that his superb book can never quite replace its predecessor of 1931. It is like a paradigm of Wales itself. What has been gained in knowledge, reason and technique has somehow been lost in magic. There was more *hwyd* in the type-face of the Thirties, and if scholars and researchers from now on will inevitably turn to Davies, old-fashioned patriots like me will still be rereading Lloyd in our baths.



Move over, Sister Wendy. The Rt Rev Richard Harries, Bishop of Oxford, has his sights on ousting you as the nation's favourite religious aesthete. But don't worry, his "devotional reflections on the Christmas story in art" (*A Gallery of Reflections: The Nativity of Christ*, Lion, £9.99) are sadly pedestrian. Botticelli's Mystic Nativity makes him regret the Church's lack of enthusiasm for liturgical dance (can we expect to see jiving in the aisles of Christ Church Cathedral?). A pair of midwives in a Russian icon lead him to the view that "We need to

maximize what we spend on new schools, provision of every kind." Luckily, the pictures are able to speak for themselves. In this serene and contemplative Visitation by the 15th-century German painter Hans Baldung Grien the Elder (above) the Virgin, pregnant with John the Baptist, meets St Elizabeth, pregnant with Jesus. A relatively rare subject in art, the Visitation has inspired some comic-strip absurdities, with the unborn babies waving woodlessly at one another from their mothers' womb, but this version has an unusual humanity and grace.

## Ambridge amours

An 'Archers' addict confesses. By Sue Gaisford

**Shula's Story** by Joanna Toye, BBC Books, £9.99

What do Pedro from Spain, Nick Wearing and Charles Hodgeson have in common? No idea? How about Robin Catchpole, Martin Lambert and Bill Morrison? Getting warmer? Try Neil Carter, Nigel Pargetter, Simon Pemberton and Mark Hebdon. If you have ever listened to Radio 4's best-loved and longest-running soap, you must be there by now. Yes, they all have been in love with Shula. Shula is the golden girl of *The Archers*, a million of a thousand disasters, whose lambent beauty and indomitable courage have enslaved these men, and millions of enraptured listeners, through a good 20 years of devotion.

Such a heroine deserves special attention and now she has acquired her own book. It is extraordinary. You can't call it a novel, though it is undoubtedly fiction. Nor is it strictly biography – for the same reason. It is really a kind of historical romance, firmly based on life in Ambridge, but decorated with visual details.

You could certainly agree with the clothes in which Joanna Toye dresses the cast. It is highly likely that the elegant Caroline Bonne, when confronted with the prospect of having to accompany Shula into labour, would cast about for some Jasper Conran splash-proof co-ordinates to slip into. And of course Jennifer Aldridge, the rich farmer's wife with literary pretensions, would wear a silk scarf with her Puffa jacket. But would Jennifer really offer her distraught daughter some Florentines "still warm from the oven"? Come along, if they were really warm, the chocolate would be runny. Even Jennifer should know that. Still, Toye hits a fine authentic note with her description of the ghastly Bunty Hebdon's lounge, with its matching salmon-pink soft furnishings and its gas log-effect fire.

When you read this kind of thing, you catch yourself wondering if she made it up or did Shula herself describe the room, in a rare bitchy moment that you might have missed on air. An invaluable companion to Toye's book is *The Book of the Archers* (Michael Joseph, £9.99), written by three of its longest serving

actors, which offers encyclopaedic information about its 44 years of existence. As Toye describes the night when Shula, amazingly, lost her virginity to creepy Simon Parker in a Netherbourne cornfield, a glance at this Bible will immediately inform you that yes, it really did happen, back in 1977. Shula, now a dewy combination of Doris Day and Delia Smith, was once a right little goer. My goodness, she even kissed Tim Beecham. She even smoked. But that was all long ago. Nearly half Toye's book is taken up with the recent problems of Shula's fertility. Here you can re-live the agony of her ectopic pregnancy, her decision to try for IVF treatment, its initial failure and subsequent success, with added lurid details about her – hang on a moment while I spell this – hysterical alpinograms. You can suffer again through the terrible night of her husband's sudden death, though you can also remember what an almighty bore he was, despite the fact that he read the *Independent*. In this chapter, you are irresistibly reminded of the stupendous acting of Judy Bennett that had millions of us weeping in cars and kitchens at his loss.

And, reader, I'm ashamed to say that I wept again, though whether my tears sprang from the memory of that performance or from the skill of Joanna Toye in retelling the story, it is impossible to say. And here's the problem with reviewing such a book. Faithful listeners will sigh at the suppression of vast chunks of plot, and quibble over details. We may pine for a glimpse of the permanently plastered Pargetters or of lush Lilian, but we are grateful for the chance to wallow again in all the drama of the life of Ambridge's resident saint. Anyone who had never heard of the place – if such a person exists – might well enjoy it as a slightly implausible novel, but he would miss so much. Only a hardened addict could appreciate the fact that the magnificently frightful Lynda Snell is mentioned only once, and that is as a figment of Shula's nightmares.

## Paperbacks

Reviewed by Emma Hagestadt and Christopher Hirst



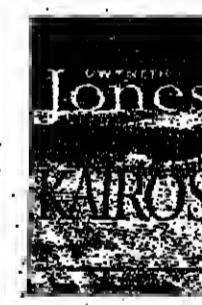
**Clapton** by Christopher Sandford (Gollancz, £5.99)

A revealing biography of the adept businessman who has built up a vast middle-of-the-road audience. Clapton emerges as unpleasantly tight-wearing drink in 1987. He has since shown staying power in the face of tragedy, but remains elusive. A lasting relationship seems beyond him – though he's not short of high-glam pals: Pfeiffer, Helvin, Kensit and, inevitably, Princess Diana.



**The Golden Warrior** by Lawrence James (Abacus, £9.99)

This lucid portrait of T.E. Lawrence probes the shimmering myth which he and others fabricated. Obsessed by chivalry since childhood, he was a brave, if ruthless, soldier. More conventional (and eight inches shorter) than his filmic image, he remains profoundly odd. James dismisses his allegations of sexual abuse by the Turks as an invention of his "Uranian muse".



**Kairos** by Gwyneth Jones (Gollancz, £5.99)

This early work by a now established sci-fi writer recalls Michael Moorcock and Angela Carter. Set in a freezing August in the near future (the book predates global warming), Otto (female) and Lucy (male) roam a nightmare landscape, pursued by killer angels. "Don't touch me, I'm made of plutonium," one character remarks, which is hard to beat as a conversation stopper.



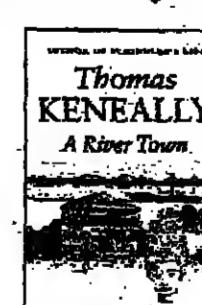
**Being Human** by Mary and John Gribben (Phoenix, £6.99)

In the middle of the Oligocene, when beavers were as big as bears and stags as tall as houses, human beings were no more than a sparkle in a hairy primate's eye. Mary and John Gribben's sociobiological explanation of life on earth decodes such mysteries as why humans cry salty tears, glaciers melt and six per cent of us are born with tails.



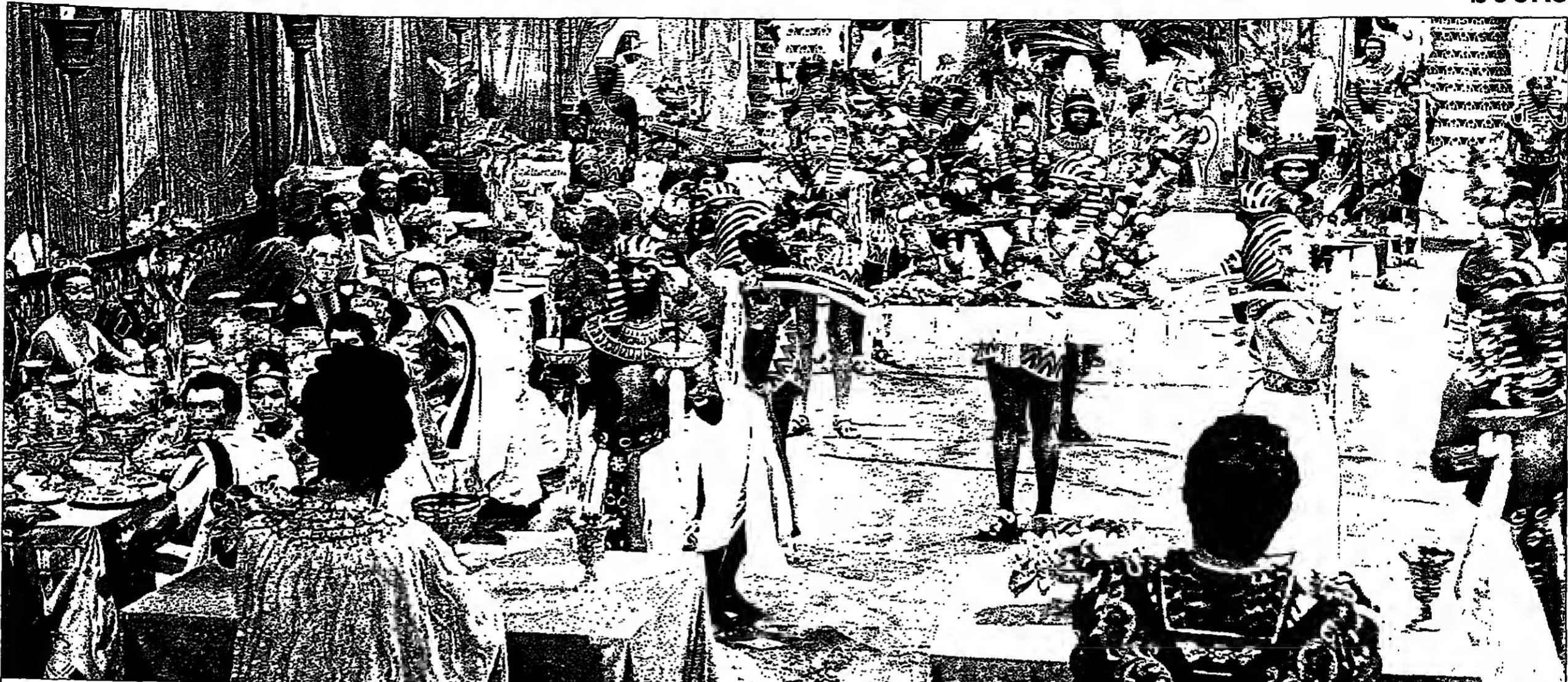
**The Penguin Book of Infidelities** ed. Stephen Brook (£8.99)

"My God, I'm doing it with Madame Bovary!" Kuglemass whispered to himself. "Me, who failed freshman English." Projected into his favourite novel, the hero of Woody Allen's most famous short story gets to meet literature's best known adulteress face to face. This exuberant anthology offers little to comfort the cuckold.



**A River Town** by Thomas Keneally (Sceptre, £5.99)

The author of *Schindler's Ark* has a nose for the primitive. His latest novel tells the story of small-town Australia at the turn of the century: a place where little girls have "hardened hands", pigs feed off corpses, and murder-victims' heads are pickled in jars. A beautifully written novel about an Irish immigrant who learns that the new world isn't much better than the old.



# The word made flesh, fowl and fricassee

As we prepare for the annual ritual of over-eating, Kevin Jackson savours the delicious relationship between literature and food

**T**is the season to be gluttonous; and the sacred text which lays down a template for all such indulgence will be familiar not only to every literate Briton but also – such was the peculiar myth-making force of its author's imagination – to millions of those who have not once opened its pages:

There was never such a goose. Bob said he didn't believe there was ever such a goose cooked. Its tenderness and flavour, size and cheapness were the themes of universal admiration. Eked out by apple sauce and mashed potatoes, it was a sufficient dinner for the whole family; indeed as Mrs Cratchit said with great delight (surveying one small atom of a bone upon the dish) they hadn't ate it all at last! ...

One must have a palate of stone to read about the Cratches' holiday feast, or any other huge feed in Dickens's fiction, without feeling the early prickles of saliva (Dickens is surely the world's leading Foodie novelist); you can scarcely flick through 10 consecutive pages without bumping into a steaming veal pie, succulent oysters, slabs of beefsteak, wedding cake, mulled wine or – curious fellow that he was – threatened cannibalism. Such scenes are magnificent folklore, and yet some readers would hesitate to admit that they are great literature, partly because *A Christmas Carol* is condescendingly regarded as Dickens Lite, partly because earnest readers seem to feel that snacks are beneath the dignity of serious writers.

"We are ambivalent", wrote the American critic Lionel Trilling, "in our conception of the moral status of eating and drinking"; and though many of our most intense experiences can be conveyed in images of food and drink, we start to get queasy if writers spend too much time hanging round the kitchen; it's simply not genteel.

For example, a couple of decades ago, Gore Vidal wrote a gloriously pungent review of the 10 novels then on the *New York Times* bestseller list, noting the common rub-tickling elements that had earned them their place at the top of the heap: the Mirror Scene (young heroine gazes into looking-glass and likes what she sees), the Nubile Scene (as above, but with more prominent nipples), the Confrontation With Mr Big Scene ... and, inevitably, the Food Scene. "Miss Holt", Vidal observes of one successful authoress, "knows her readers like a good din from time to time along with romance."

One smirks at Mr Vidal's dig, but its snobbery leaves a nasty taste in the mouth. As the case of Dickens shows, pulp novels aren't the only kind of books designed for drooling over: the form of writing Vidal waggishly refers to as "Quality Lit." has seldom been any less keen to lay on a good spread for readers than the pulp stuff. In fact Thackeray, a bestselling writer of his day now safely established as Quality Lit., wrote that "Next to eating good dinners, a healthy man with a benevolent turn of mind must like, I think, to read about them".

True to his principle, Thackeray treated his customers to the splendid "white dinner" of *Pendennis* ("potage à la reine blanche confectioned with the most fragrant cream and almonds ... a dish of opal-coloured plover's eggs; which I called Nid de tourteau à la Roucoule ... and a jelly of marasquin, bland, insinuating, intoxicating as the glance of beauty") and Becky Sharp's first disastrous encounter with a blisteringly hot curry in *Vanity Fair* – a scene, incidentally, which has its modern-day counterparts in Keith Tippett's self-lacerating Indian meal in *Martin Amis's London Fields* and in Les Murray's moving (aficionados of spicy curry will know just how moving) poem about his close encounter with a rogue Vindaloo in South Wales. Nor is it just the robust British novelists who are conspicuously fond of their grub. You can find feasting in Flaubert ("whole sheep cooked in sweet wine, cauls and bladders" haunches, hedgehogs in garum sauce, fried grasshoppers and pickled dormice...); Salammbo; and in Proust; in Horner (Fielding in *Tom Jones*, calls the *Odyssey* "that eating poem") and in Rimbaud.

This is a five-star lineage, and it is only a taster. Why, then, has the notion that food is a rather low subject for literature proved so tenacious? The art historian E.H. Gombrich gave one good answer: because the Platonic, "spiritual" senses of the eye and ear have traditionally enjoyed far higher prestige than the supposedly grosser ones of tongue and nose. The literary critic Christopher Ricks gave another, in his inspired discussion of Keats's "The Eve of St Agnes" in *Keats and Embarrassment*. Among the suggestions Ricks brings into play are anthropological writings about tribes who try to hide their acts of ingestion from public gaze as Westerners hide their acts of copulation.

Eating is our earliest sensual pleasure. If as adults we feel a bit abashed of being seen to like our food too much, it's because we fear we may be slipping back into childish things. Restad offers an intelligent and richly furnished answer to all the Christmas killjoys who shake their heads over modern materialism and secularism. If anything, she argues, Christmas today is a good deal more civilized and charitable than it ever used to be. Those polite little bands of carol-singers rattling their collecting tins to strains of "The First Nowell" are in fact the last vestiges of the wild and entirely self-indulgent revelers who once roamed the streets banging on doors and letting off guns. For Christmas, season of the Roman Saturnalia and the Norse Yule, was never exclusively religious: far from deserting its true origins by making it a season of party-going, we have maintained them.

Moreover, reading about eating is one of our earliest literary pleasures. (And we learn to read aloud before we learn to read silently: literature is originally an oral gratification.) Between "once upon a time" and "happily ever after", we want to know what's for supper. Hence all the chocolate factories and tuck shops and midnight feasts in children's books; hence the amiable bears with their porridge; hence all the picnic baskets, of which one – Rat's, from *The Wind in the Willows* – may stand in its unpunctuated, groaning splendour for all the others:

"What's inside it?" asked the Mole, wriggling with curiosity.  
"There's cold chicken inside it", replied the Rat briefly, "cold tongue, cold ham, cold beef, pickled herring, cold fresh rolls, cold sandwiches, spotted meat, ginger beer, cold lemonade, water..."

"Stop stop," cried the Mole in consternation: "this is too much!"

Mole is an acute critic: it is just this greedy child quality of gorging on "too much" that delights some readers and disconcerts others when offered a good verbal tuck-in. As Ricks points out, Keats was sneered at from all sides for his sweet poetic tooth: "Keats is a miser-

able creature, hungering after sweets which he can't get", Carlyle groused, while Leigh Hunt's nickname for John Keats was "Juakets". The jibes had a point. Any bright GCSE candidate can tell you all about the transferred eroticism of Keats's goodies:

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,  
In blanched linen, smooth, and lavender'd.  
While he from forth the closet hrought a  
heap  
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and  
gourd  
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,  
And lucent syrups, tinted with cinnamon...

One of the many things which is extraordinary about Keats's poetry is its ability to convey an unabashed, Mole-ish ecstasy about luxuriant edibles. This is rare. For the most part, whenever a writer starts dwelling on outlandish fare in unfeasibly large quantities, it's a fair bet he's a satirist: Juvenal, for example, or Petronius in the *Satyricon*, bogging at "a Dish of cramm'd Fowl and the hinder Paps of a Sow that had farrowed but a day before, well Powdered, and in the middle a Hare, stuck in with Finns of Fish in his side, that he looked like a Flying Horse..."

Such grisly fare rapidly states, though: the best modern fiction about food, high and low, has the capacity to combine revulsion and delight into a single course, often by means of comedy. At the one end of the menu, Mr Bloom's fried kidney from Joyce's *Ulysses* or Belacqua's carbonised sandwich from *More Pucks Than Kickers*; at the other, the gleefully highly seductive gastronoming of Charlie Mondeca in Kyril Bonfiglioli's *Mondeca Trilogy*.

Toothsome as all these modern writers are, there is one quality they tend to be less deft at conveying than the writers of earlier times: the sense that one virtue which can redeem hearty group eating from mere gluttony is the chance it affords to give and accept hospitality, to use the mouth for good talking as well as vigorous mastication. No poem in the English language captures the civilisation or the civility of eating quite so engagingly as Ben Jonson's lines inviting a friend to supper:

Yet shall you have, to rectify your palate  
An onion, capers, or some better salade  
Ushring the mutton with a short-leg'd hen  
If we can get her, full of eggs, and then.  
Lemons, and wine for sauce; to these, a coney  
Is not to be despair'd of, for our money:  
And, though fowle, now, be scarce, yet there  
Are clarke's.  
The skie not falling, think we may have larkes...

And what larks. Bon appetit.



Soother than the creamy curd: the guests at Trimalchio's feast tickle their jaded palates (above) in Fellini's 'Satyricon' and (top) sybaritic eating from 'Cleopatra'.

Pictures: Ronald Grant Archive

## Plum pudding in the melting pot

From Santa Claus to 'Away in the Manger', many of our best loved Christmas traditions are American imports, according to a new cultural history. By Christina Hardymon

**D**on't be put off by the limited sphere of reference implied by the title of this seasonal but far from trivial offering. Penne Restad's account of how Christmas came of age in America is both informative and illuminating, a gem of cultural history. Best of all, Restad offers an intelligent and richly furnished answer to all the Christmas killjoys who shake their heads over modern materialism and secularism.

If anything, she argues, Christmas today is a good deal more civilized and charitable than it ever used to be. Those polite little bands of carol-singers rattling their collecting tins to strains of "The First Nowell" are in fact the last vestiges of the wild and entirely self-indulgent revelers who once roamed the streets banging on doors and letting off guns. For Christmas, season of the Roman Saturnalia and the Norse Yule, was never exclusively religious: far from deserting its true origins by making it a season of party-going, we have maintained them.

In the 19th century, increased prosperity saw Christmas retreating from the streets and becoming concentrated on the family. Nativity became uppermost: the wild Germanic forest festivities were tamed into tiny tabletop trees. Gifts, dismissed by the early puritan settlers as pagan pleasures, became an important expression of communal and familial ties.

"Christmas won't be Christmas without any presents" opens Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, that most family-centred of children's classics. It set the agenda for the acceptability of the gift as an expression of love, while at the same time emphasising that it was the giving rather than the gift which matters. Marmee's dutiful daughters give what they have to the deserving poor, but still contrive, through personal sacrifice and effort, to signal their love for each other in small keepsakes. The ultimate gift they themselves receive is the return of their father from war.

*Little Women* is by no means the only

significant Christmas text we have adopted from America. Restad claims that we owe Santa as we know him today to New Yorker Clement Clarke Moore, who in 1822 dashed off a rollicking ballad, now universally known as "The Night Before Christmas". It could have remained hidden in the family's album, but a visitor copied it out, and the next year it appeared in a New York magazine, the *Troy Sentinel*. From then on, chimneys, reindeer and a rosy-cheeked, portly Santa Claus peeking out of department store grottoes became part of the canon.

Christmas cards and carols may have originated in Europe, but by the time the Americans had finished with them they, like Santa, had been infinitely embellished. The cultural melting pot of the new nation took an eclectic mixture of Christmas traditions – Dutch, Scandinavian, English, Italian – and rolled them all up together into a new whole, every bit as rich and varied as plum pudding. "Rudolf the Red-nosed Reindeer", "Jingle Bells" and even "Away in a Manger" all came to us courtesy of the good old U.S. of A.

Occasionally, a xenophobe might feel that Restad overstates her claims. "The North Pole elves were not unlike immigrants working in the nation's sweatshops", we are told. Dickens, she asserts, owed the inspiration of his 1842 *Christmas Carol* to a visit to America. "Prior to then Dickens had not shown much interest in the holiday". By the 1880s, "Americans had reinvented Christmas ... as a lens through which to envision, as a people, from whence they came and who they had become." But for the most part she succeeds

in establishing a compelling argument for the value of this oldest of all our traditions.

Although the book concentrates on the development of Christmas traditions in the 19th century, her last chapter offers some provocative observations on the effect of mass media and international marketing techniques on the festival. The Christmas Eve promenade to see the city centre en fête and choose gifts for one's nearest and dearest has been steadily extended into a four or even six week Nightmare before Christmas.

She concludes, some would say optimistically, that we have driven rather than been dragged towards our present hectic celebrations. For all the commercialization, "we do not give up. Christmas remains the most important holiday on our nation's calendar... it causes us to examine relationships with our families, our community, and our faith. At Christmastide we must, directly or even by omission, set our priorities, establish our tolerances and square our hopes with reality."

country

# A working Christmas in Wales

The small Welsh border settlement of Montgomery has been described as a town which time forgot. Founded in 1227, it managed to avoid many of the upheavals of the next seven centuries. It was bypassed by the railways and subsequently by the canals. Today it is only dissected by a winding, mud-spattered road. This isolation has prevented it becoming a haven for commuters and has enabled it to retain its sense of community. Many believe it is one of the last unspoilt towns in



Wales, which may be why a few years ago a BBC crew chose to shoot much of "A Child's Christmas in Wales" here. At first glance, the town seems tranquil, sleepy even. Sheepdogs loll across the cobbles in the quiet main street. Shop doorbells tinkle as elderly women leave laden with bags. But behind Montgomery's sedate appearance is a flurry of activity. For the town's hoteliers, farmers, vets and GPs it is the busiest time of year...

By Matthew Brace



#### Dr John Wynn-Jones, GP

"I'll be on call this Christmas. I do three Christmases out of every four. I've got about 7,000 patients in the practice area, so things can get quite busy." Every year we have a flu epidemic, so you have to be prepared for that. Christmases have got busier and busier and I think that's connected to the commercialisation of Christmas. People put so much into Christmas now, financially and emotionally, because so much is expected. Buying the best presents, the best trees. I'm not being bitter about this, but all these things can add up to people's stress.

"I do feel that country people seem genuinely upset about calling you out at Christmas. They're always very apologetic. But that's what this town is like. It's human. People feel human living here."

"I think Dylan Thomas would have liked Montgomery. I can just see him holding forth at the bar in the Dragon, making fun of the Welsh. This place is full of characters. One Christmas Day I went down to the surgery and set the alarms off by mistake. The police arrived and I said how sorry I was for troubling them. One policeman said: 'Oh, don't upset yourself doc, as a matter of fact I've got this terrible ear ache, you couldn't look at it for me could you?'

"I'm the rural medical advisor for *The Archers*, so that keeps me busy, too. I remember one of my first Christmases doing this, I had to advise on a storyline about Mike the milkman who was severely depressed after his marriage break-up. Everyone thought that he would commit suicide on Christmas Day, but in the end he didn't. It was quite a big story, that."

#### Mark Michaels, hotel owner

"It's going to be busy this year. We're fully booked, Christmas and New Year."

"This is always our busiest time of year, and I think it's my favourite as well. Christmas comes to us, you could say. You get to see all Montgomery's wonderful characters in the bay. If you're here around Christmas time, someone once said every place has its village idiot, but Montgomery seems to have six. The bar is very busy most nights with carol singers, local people from the town or those who are just visiting."

"We get people from all over the country – London, Scotland – and a lot of them are return guests. Over this New Year, 80 per cent of them will have been here before. We are usually the last stop for people on New Year's Eve, because then they go outside and link arms around the Town Hall for Auld Lang Syne at midnight."

"We have to plan Christmas Day quite carefully. My wife and I and our two daughters have breakfast first, then the guests, then it's time to open our presents, then on with the lunch... It's quite hectic and it's very much a full working day. We've got to make the staff get off early to go and have their Christmases too."

"My wife and I are both from London originally, so Montgomery was quite different at first, especially at this time of year. Much more relaxed. It's a very special place. It's slower in the caring sense, in that we've got time for other people, but it's not slower in a boxing rural sense."

Ted Edwards tends his flock, left: 'On Christmas morning the milk tanker man wants to get home for his lunch, so he comes even earlier than usual'. Top: Montgomery, used as the model for the BBC's 'Child's Christmas in Wales'. Photographs: John Potter/Newsteam (top) and Matthew Brace

#### Frances Butler, vet

"Christmas varies when you're working – sometimes it's really quiet, other times you can be rushing around. When I work over Christmas I stay by the phones to take the calls. You can be out in the car for most of the day."

"We can get a lot of sick dogs over Christmas because they've been eating the chocolates off the tree. There's a chemical in some chocolate that can kill them. I've had to put dogs down over Christmas, which is not very nice. But generally there tends to be more common sense in the countryside about pets than you might find in the big towns."

"One of the worst things about working at Christmas for me is that I can't do my carol singing. I sing alto in the church choir, but it makes it a bit difficult getting to rehearsals and services when you're on duty. The rector's very good though. I brought my mobile phone in to church once. I felt really bad sitting there in my pew with it, but it only went off once."

"I remember my first Christmas here. I'm not one for going into pubs on my own, but here I was made to feel really welcome. Christmas is like that here. For a lot of people, especially those who don't get out much, it might be the only time they see a lot of their friends in a year. I'm sure a lot of odd things go on around here at Christmas as well, but it's the men who'll know about them, the naughty stories. There's a certain aspect of rural courtesy here which means that women don't get told the more risky stories."

#### Ted Edwards, dairy farmer

"We're usually up and milking by 5am on Christmas morning. We've got a dairy farm here, a 56-acre smallholding, and we've been here 20 years, so we're used to getting up early in the morning."

"Usually the milk tanker comes at about 6am, but on Christmas morning the tanker driver wants to get home for his lunch, so he comes even earlier. That early start means you have to take it a bit easy on Christmas Eve and get to bed at a good time."

"One Christmas it was so icy we had trouble getting the tanker up the drive. Took us three-quarters of an hour because it was slipping and sliding so much. We could have stayed in bed. Christmas is a special time for me. We go to our Chapel on Christmas morning after the first milking and then come back for lunch. My son and daughter come home, which is nice. It's always been a family day – I wouldn't want it any different. I've never wanted to go away for Christmas. Wouldn't seem right."

"Montgomery is like that, a family place with an atmosphere of togetherness. You've got your rogues, like any place but mainly it's a good town – the odd poacher."

"One year we had a calf born here on the farm on Christmas Day. It was quite a surprise, but it brought the Christmas message closer to home. It was a Christmas present I suppose."

"I miss the Christmases I had when I was young. We would do all our own plucking and feathering and take in birds from our neighbours. There was so many feathers floating about, you had to strain your cups of tea so you didn't get down in your mouth."

Billy built a circular summerhouse, which became known as Gran's cage, and in this the old lady sat with her knitting while Tara prowled free outside

**A**t Tiger Haven, on the border of India and Nepal, they will be celebrating Christmas much as we are. Billy Arjan Singh – big cat specialist extraordinaire – is a bachelor, but his tribe has gathered at his white house on the edge of the jungle, and because the family has English connections, proceedings strike a strongly western note.

A blazing log fire in the sitting room will banish the chill of the Indian winter; a tree will be decorated, and Father Christmas, in full regalia, and fortified by a peg or two of whisky, will distribute presents to the children after carols and supper. One notable absentee will be the traditional dish of roast peacock, for the birds are now protected – and perhaps it is just as well that goose will fill the bill, because Billy's tame peacock Tom Dooley, which struts about outside, might take a dim view of any revision to barbaric customs.

My thoughts were sent winging to Tiger Haven by a television programme about



DUFF  
HART-DAVIS

John Aspinall's attempts to reintroduce gorillas to the rain forest of Central Africa. The experiment – as courageous as it was expensive – ended in partial success. Three of the six animals released succumbed to disease brought on by stress, but the others took to the forest eagerly and, when last filmed, were doing well. Yet at the end of the programme came a chilling statistic – that during the time the film was being made, at least 800 other gorillas had been killed.

There is a close parallel between Aspinall's work with

apes and that done by Arjan Singh with Tara, a tigress, during the 1970s. At a time when India's stock of tigers had sunk to its lowest ebb, Billy imported a cub from England and brought it up in and around his house, determined to prove that when the animal grew to maturity, its inbred instincts would assert themselves, and it would take to the jungle.

Before that happened, certain problems presented themselves. One was that Billy's mother became scared of this immense cat, which soon weighed 300lbs. To calm her nerves, Billy built her a circular summerhouse thatched with straw, which became known as Gran's Cage, and in this the old lady sat with her knitting, while Tara prowled free outside.

In time Billy's predictions were proved triumphantly right. At the age of three Tara vanished into the forest, never returned, and during a full life bore four litters of cubs to wild males. Yet the

experiment made Billy many enemies. Hidebound conservationists accused him of polluting the local strain of Bengal tiger with a "genetic cocktail" – to which he replied that he could imagine nothing better than the infusion of vigorous new genes. He was much excited by the recent appearance of a tiger with distinctly Siberian markings, and it now seems that Tara may have carried echoes of that sub-species in her make-up.

A more sinister accusation was that she had turned man-eater. During the 1970s and 1980s an outbreak of man-eating spread through the district, Kheri. More than 100 humans were killed. Again and again people said, "It's that bloody tiger of yours. Because it was brought up with humans, it has no fear of them."

Being a volunteer wildlife warden, Billy was repeatedly called out to shoot tigers summarily convicted of murder. Always he went with a heavy heart, dreading that the culprit might be Tara. It never

was, and she lived on to the age of 14 before – so far as he knew – dying a natural death.

But the moral of the story is exactly that of the gorillas. No matter how much ingenuity, money and love a man may spend in attempts at reintroduction, the real villain is the human race and its insatiable demand for land.

In India, as in Africa, the ultimate problem for wildlife is not poaching, but shortage of space. The man-eating broke out in Kheri because humans infiltrated the reserves officially set aside for tigers. In Africa the gorilla's habitat is similarly being eaten away. So if Billy Arjan Singh should hear the deep *au-* of a tiger boom out from behind the house on Christmas morning, it will be a present more precious than anything the Magi could have brought him.



See! the angelic host proclaim... some 72 per cent of Americans claim to have had close encounters with angels; the British are scarcely less credulous. Justine Picardie on the boom industry of the Nineties

Plus: 'Hermitage' – a new short story by Julian Barnes

And full TV and radio listings for the Christmas holiday

IN TOMORROW'S INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

# A place on Millionaires' Row

Anne Spackman on the top 10 house sales of the year

**F**or the third year running, entry to the top 10 British house sales of the year requires a minimum down-payment of £4m. More than 50 sales at over £1.5m have taken place in London alone this year, but most are eclipsed by a handful of exceptional houses and estates bought by some of the richest people in the world.

The pinnacle of the British property market bears as much resemblance to the mainstream market as Concorde does to a Trabant. It only takes a dozen bankers at Goldman Sachs to earn million pound bonuses for there to be 12 new customers bidding for the country's finest houses. Over the past three years there have been plenty of them about – and many more are in the pipeline for 1996.

If the property market anything to go by, London is now firmly established as one of the big three financial cities of the world, along with New York and Tokyo. Agents handling houses on the Phillimore Estate in Kensington – one of the City's preferred zones – say prices have risen by 50 per cent over the last three years. Prices in the best parts of London have generally risen 20-30 per cent over the period. It is bankers and businessmen, rather than lottery winners, who are driving them up.

The top 10 sales lists are always comprised of London houses and large country estates. This year, as last, the capital dominates. This is partly because land prices are currently soaring like house prices did in the late Eighties. Farmers, particularly of the gentleman-landowner variety, have never had it so good. They are buying land rather than selling. When the very good stuff does hit the market, the price achieved is what estate agents term "very full".

Last year saw a series of record-breaking sales of new ambassadorial residences around Regent's Park. This year it is the family houses of Chelsea, Holland Park and Kensington which have most consistently rung up the multi-million pound receipts.

Property Vision, the buying agents who acted for two of the property purchasers in this list, believe that pattern is set to continue. The company says the richest people will continue to flock to west London or the M40/M4/M3 belt west of the capital. For properties of the right calibre in the right place the competition can only get hotter. Meanwhile here is our list of the top 10 properties for sale in 1995...

## 1. The Old Rectory, Old Church Street, Chelsea

This spectacular speculative development was sold in February by Knight Frank & Rutley for around £22m to a Greek family for use as their principal residence. They are said to be spending the same amount again on furniture and decorations. Once an ordinary rectory, the house was extended into an ambassadorial home by the fashionable Toyoko Metropolitan Company, who completed three such ventures last year. The house has two vast entertaining rooms, 10 bedroom suites, an indoor swimming pool lined with black marble and a safe the size of the average living room. Though it is just off King's Road it has an amazing two acres of gardens, including a tennis court and summer house.

## 2. The Laverstoke Estate, Hampshire

This 3,000-acre slice of finest England is believed to be under offer with a price-tag of £10m. It has all the prerequisites of a fine country estate: a beautiful parkland setting, a lake, fishing on the River Test, a pheasant and partridge shoot, not to mention the vast Georgian house itself where the library is bigger than the ballroom. The Laverstoke Estate is being sold by Savills for De La Rue, who acquired it through a business takeover. Savills refuse to comment on the deal.

## 3. Number 18 Holland Park, London

Holland Park has been on this list three years running and features twice in 1995. It has become the place for large, well-arranged, freehold family houses. Number 18 is a classic double-fronted white stucco villa with an addi-

tional mews house. A sale was agreed with the owner from Singapore at a staggering £8m, but a gizmo came along, forcing the eventual price up to £8.3m. The happy agents were John D Wood.

## 4. The Salperton Estate in Gloucestershire

It took a long time to find a buyer for the Cotswold estate that was owned by the businessman Victor Watkins. Its main attractions are 1,700 acres with pheasant and partridge shoot and 33 cottages, as well as the 18th-century manor house. Savills eventually sold it for around £8m to another businessman, self-made millionaire Barry Houghton, who made his money in the telecommunications business.

## 5. Chesham Place, Belgravia, London

One family paid just over £7m for two neighbouring houses and a flat to live in while the houses were being knocked into one. They are officially mews houses, but have grand reception rooms and gardens on a par with the townhouses in the neighbourhood. They were sold by Knight Frank & Rutley.

## 6. Beaufort Castle, Scotland

Number one on the list of most romantic sales of the year. This ancestral seat of the Frasers of Lovat, situated on the banks of the Beauly Firth near Inverness, was bought in August by Ann Gloag, the bus driver's daughter who founded the Stagecoach transport empire. Brought up in a council house in Perth, she is now the owner of a 24-bedroom Highland castle and 500 acres. Ann Gloag paid about £2m for her slice of the estate and the rest of the 19,000 acres was sold for £4m in 17 separate lots by Finlayson Hughes and Knight Frank & Rutley.

## 7. Number 24 Rutland Gate, Kensington, London

Number 24 was the Accademia Italiana, a 40 room mansion with five inter-communicating reception rooms and 14,000 sq ft of living space. It was sold for more than £5m by Savills and Knight Frank & Rutley to a private buyer who is converting it into a family house.

## 8. Osborne House, Chelsea, London

This was a very English sale. Osborne House is a genuine Georgian property with lovely gardens of one third of an acre, some six bedrooms and off-street parking for five cars. It is the kind of house more commonly found in Gloucestershire than Chelsea. It was sold in the summer by Chesterfield and Knight Frank & Rutley for around £5m to an English purchaser.

## 9. Number 10 Holland Park, London

Another period, double-fronted house whose symmetry was destroyed by a garage on the lower ground floor. The new owners are expected to change that arrangement while stripping out the rest of the house – currently divided into a maisonette and two large flats. It was sold last week by John D Wood for just under £5m.

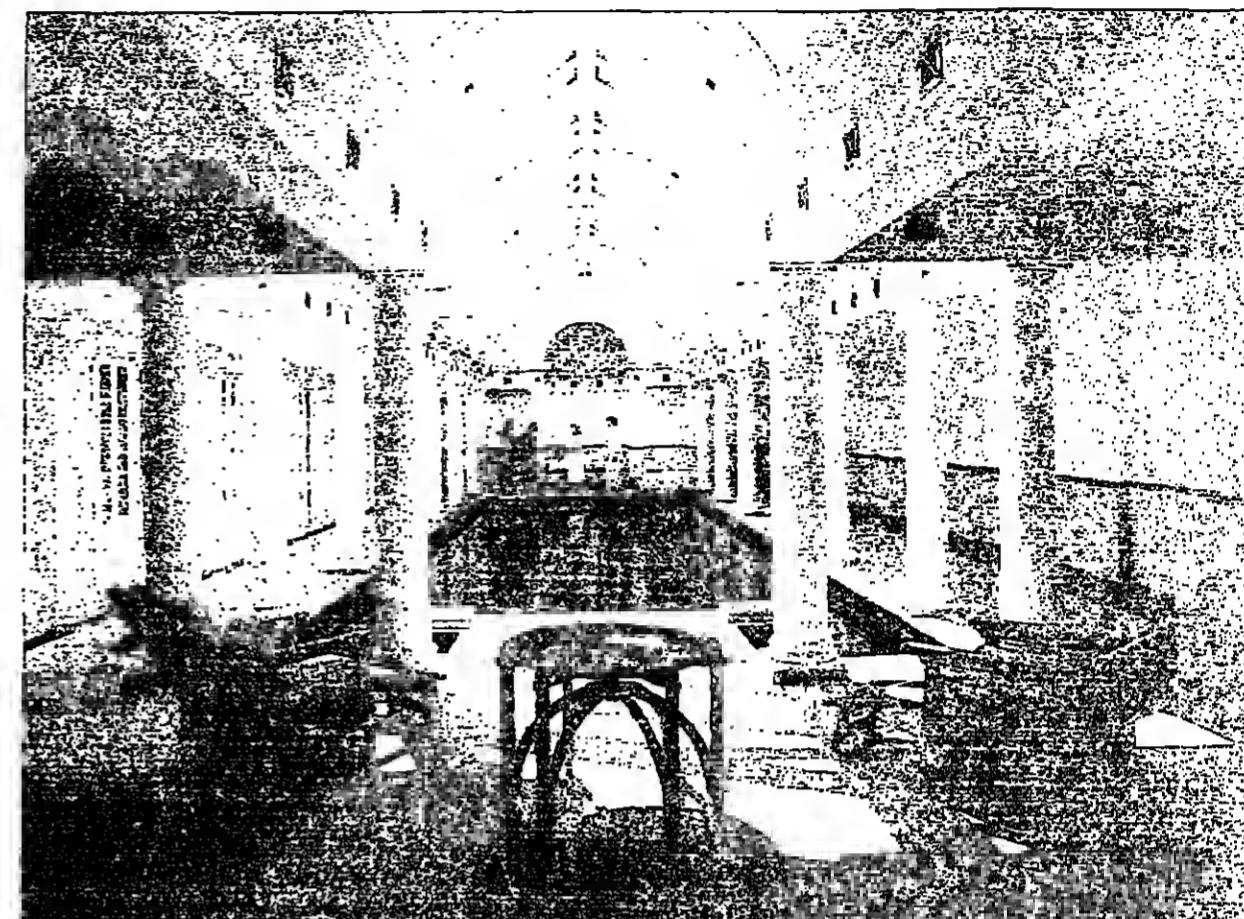
## 10. Number 3a Kensington Palace Green, Kensington, London

This is the penthouse flat in the Regaline Block that became synonymous with the property crash. It has featured on this list three times in three years, changing hands more like a batch of shares than a home. This time the price was £4.5m through Knight Frank & Rutley.

## And finally...

### a top garage sale:

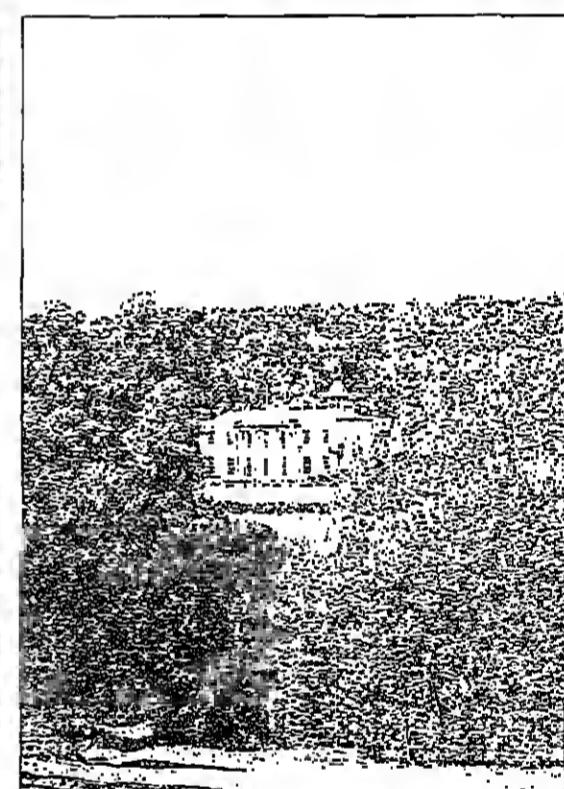
Ivana Trump's husband Riccardo Mazzucelli paid £100,000 for a garage in Shaftesbury Mews, Knightsbridge, London, near his home in Cadogan Square. The garage is large enough to house his gold Rolls-Royce convertible, which cost nearly twice as much. With parking spaces at such a premium it now costs the same to buy a single garage in central London as a three-bedroom semi-detached house in Barnes.



The Old Rectory, Chelsea Photo: Herbie Knott



Left: Beaufort Castle in Scotland. In August the castle plus 800 acres sold for £2m, the rest of the 19,000 acres went for £4m. Right: the 3,000-acre Laverstoke Estate, Hampshire, that is believed to be on offer with a price of £10m. The library is said to be even bigger than the ballroom.



## Holly may be the last remnant of the natural landscape

Holly has a place, even in a modern garden. By Anna Pavord

**T**he holly and the ivy/When they are both full grown/Of all the trees that are in the wood/Dum dum dum dum." You've probably heard the carol a dozen times already, beamed into shopping malls, programmed into end-of-term nativity plays. The words are quite weird, suggesting the pagan figure of the Green Man lurking at the crib.

Holly, one of this country's rather small collection of native evergreens, carries symbolic baggage along with its berries. It stands for life in the bleak midwinter and, in country areas at least, still commands great respect. Even mechanical hedge cutters are guided carefully round a holly's smooth-skinned trunk. The dark green beacons rise up from lane green hedges more often than any other tree.

How many billions of years did it take for holly to design its defence system? You can see why these evergreens need them. As winter strips the landscape bare of leaves, evergreens become magnets for browsers. Few concocted a deadly poison: ivy, which sheep graze voraciously in winter, got itself off the ground and into the air; holly has its prickles.

The clever thing about the holly's prickles is that they work in so many planes. Leaves generally are flat, two-dimensional, like stencils. The holly leaf has a central midrib, like any other leaf, and eight pairs of veins branching out from the midrib in parallel lines to the eight spines on either side of the leaf. But then symmetry is abandoned and every point turns its own line. Some curl back under the leaf, some turn up to the sky, some fill the slanting voids in

between. It means that whichever angle you approach it from, the leaf will jah you. It's strange how each point knows what its neighbour is up to and makes sure to do something different.

Think of the leaf as a rugby forward line, said a botanist friend. If a winger, or next door point, darts off in a certain direction, the rest don't follow, but do what will be best for the team as a whole, covering the gaps.

And yes, I know that a football analogy would be much more fashionable, but being Welsh, I was 22 before I ever saw a football game. It was at Liverpool and they were playing Everton, but the match seemed to have little of the drama of the Newport/ Cardiff rugby jousts on which I had been brought up.

Hollies are underrated, now because they are slow. We live in an impatient age. People move around more than they used to and don't particularly want to plant things that they won't get the benefit of. This is a danger in gardens. It leads to lawsuits that, like instant takeaway food, are ultimately unsatisfying. The ingredients are limited and, after the initial gratification, there is no longer sense of longer pleasures. A holly can give you that – in spades.

In your garden, you can make a stand against the prevailing mood of the age. The great 18th-century landscape gardens were made at a time when their busy agricultural owners were fencing and hedging and parcelling and enclosing land. Capability Brown's landscapes reminded them of a pastoral past, before turnips, before corn.

If the mood now is instant, disposable, then our gardens should become places where the opposite things are going on. We should be planting slow, steady, sustaining things. In the garden at least, if in no other part of our lives, we can plan a future.

A satisfying garden is a resonant one. That is easier to recognise than to pin down. A resonant garden has things going on in it that are not of the here and now. Built into it are messages from previous owners of the garden and previous uses of the space.

Even after the mammoth building boom of the Eighties, most people live in places that others have lived in before. Even if the house itself is new, the space around it may carry hints of what happened there previously. Huge pear trees in suburban gardens round the outskirts of London remind us of the orchards that used to feed the tenement dwellers of the city. Big old hay trees planted close to houses recall the time when gardeners believed quite literally that "neither wind nor devil, thunder nor lightning will hurt a man in the place where a bay tree is" as the 17th-century herbalist Nicholas Culpeper put it.

Look for *flex. alata* 'Silver Sentinel' with grey-green leaves edged in cream (female), broad-leaved *Camellia* (female), gold-variegated 'Golden King' (female), 'Hodginsii' with its irregularly produced spines (male), 'Lawsoniana', whose dark green leaves have bright yellow centres (female), compact, dome-shaped 'Wilsonii' (female) and *L. aquifolium* 'L.C. van Tol' with large crops of berries (female). Only female trees bear berries but there must be a male tree in the vicinity to pollinate them.

sen the pear tree at the bottom of the garden, but it is probably not doing a bad job. You can absorb it by swinging a hammock from its branches or growing a clematis up its trunk.

A holly at the bottom of the garden may be the last remnant of the natural landscape that existed before urbanisation spread over your patch. That is quite a comforting thought – a thread that connects the before with the after. It need not stop you planting cyclamen close to its trunk and ferns to unfurl after the holly's berries have gone.

Some ecological gaueliers insist that only by planting wildernesses can gardeners attain to the ranks of the ecologically blessed. That is bunkum. The ecological soundness of gardeners has to do with their methods, not their choice of plants. A so-called "wild" garden is not intrinsically better for the environment than a tended one, though different creatures round the outskirts of London will thrive in each. The holly, though will stand for a little bit of unclaimed territory at the edge of your kingdom and will add immeasurably to the spirit of the place.

Once planted, these beautiful Spring-flowering bulbs thrive by being left alone. The brightly coloured mixtures are never dull and are handy for filling in gaps in the rock garden. They are also excellent in any kind of container.

## INDEPENDENT READERS' OFFER

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travel

# Another time, another place

Seasonal stories by five celebrated travellers

PATRICK LEIGH FERMOR, 1933, Germany

In the year Hitler came to power Patrick Leigh Fermor walked through Germany on his way to Constantinople. He spent Christmas at Bingen in the Rhineland



The ceremony was made memorable by the candlelit faces of the girls and by their beautiful and clear voices. I was rather surprised that they didn't sing "Stille Nacht"; it had been much in the air the last few days; but it is a Lutheran hymn and I think this bank of the Rhine was mostly Catholic. Two of the carols they sang have stuck in my memory: "O Du Heilige" and "Es ist ein

Ros entsprung": both were entrancing, and especially the second, which, they told me, was very old. In the end I went to church with them and stayed the night. When all the inhabitants of Bingen were exchanging greetings with each other outside the church in the small hours, a few flakes began falling. Next morning the household embraced each other, shook hands again and wished everyone a happy Christmas. The smallest of the daughters gave me a tangerine and a packet of cigarettes wrapped beautifully in tinsel and silver paper. I wished I'd had something to hand her, neatly done up in a holly-patterned ribbon – I thought later of my aluminium pencil case containing a new Venus or Royal Sovereign wound in tissue paper, but too late.

From 'A Time of Gifts' by Patrick Leigh Fermor  
© John Murray

LAURIE LEE, 1953, Spain

Laurie Lee lived in Spain during the Civil War. He returned 15 years later and spent the winter travelling through Andalucia, with Christmas in Granada.



controlled by absolute self confidence and taste.

In the Palace gardens there was a Christmas lunch of bread and raisins, and then, in the afternoon, followed a great crowd under a threatening sky to see another bull fight. This was a special show designed to celebrate the first day of the Pascua. Six young Granadinos, nominated by their various supporters, had been voted into the ring to fight six young bulls as green in years and mixed in courage as they were.

We climbed to the wide concrete seats high above the arena and shared a cask of wine with a family from Alpujarra. The bull ring was crowded to the sky, the black clouds rolled down from the mountains, the air darkened, and the young *toreros*, in their tight suits, looked wan and frightened.

The spectacle that now began was in many ways a repetition of the one we had seen in Seville. There was the same drawn intensity on the faces of the boys, the same brash courage alternating with bouts of hysterical panic, the same uneven, confused and often vicious bulls. It was their very youth that made them so dangerous. They came trotting in, their fleshy tails held high, cast puzzled eyes around the crowd, caught sight of some wavering challenge in the ring and charged

or retreated according to their mettle. Then, with as much grace and style as the boy could muster, he would step forward and run the bull close to his body. Often, at this early stage, the bull's innocence made him charge the cape every time, and if the boy was lucky the passes were straight and clean, the bull's rushes shorter and tighter. This, like a successful dribble at football, was what the crowd had come to see, and its effect on them was like a shared orgasm, so that they shouted together "Olé!" in one great voice, a loud excited noise to be heard all over the city.

It was in the later stages of the combat that the boys showed their inexperience, when the bull grew more difficult to handle, when the harts of the *bandilleros* had torn his shoulders and he had grown angry and dismayed. Then he would stand alone in the middle of the ring, bellowing and dripping blood, or would wander miserably into a corner trying to escape. Only the best of bull fighters could make anything of that situation, could lead the bull back into the fight and finish him cleanly. A less assured *torero* – like most of those we saw that afternoon – would run after the retreating bull with a kind of bitter sickness on his face, hating the whole thing, would wave his arms, and shout and caper, and sooner or later, in his frantic misery, get well tossed for his pains.

Everybody got tossed that afternoon, and some several times. There was one poor fellow named Angelito, a blond boy with large ears, who soon lost all control of his bull and was thrown round the ring like a shuttlecock. The crowd was much amused by this, especially our neighbour from Alpujarra, who rolled in the aisles with delight.

From 'A Rose for Winter' by Laurie Lee, © Hogarth Press

P J D'Rourke, 1985, El Salvador

As a foreign correspondent P J O'Rourke found himself in El Salvador over Christmas. He had arrived full of preconceptions



stranger to loud noise. I've been to a Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels concert. I once dated a woman with two kids. But at midnight on Christmas Eve – with the windows shut, the air conditioner on, the TV turned up and the bathroom door closed – I couldn't hear myself sing "Wild Colonial Boy" in the shower. On Christmas Day I saw people raking their yards, gathering mounds of spent grey firecrackers as large as autumn leaf piles.

You'd think after six years of civil war and 464 years of civil unrest, more explosions would be the last thing the Salvadoreans would want. Or, maybe, the thing they want most.

From 'Holidays in Hell' by P J O'Rourke © Picador (£5.99)



The snow-covered Rhineland, where Patrick Leigh Fermor spent Christmas in 1933

Photograph: J Allan Cash

ERIC NEWBY, 1963, India

With his wife Wanda, Eric Newby followed the Ganges from Hardwar to the Bay of Bengal. Christmas was at Kanpur in Orissa



Eve with Mass at the Roman Catholic Church in the Cantonment. When we arrived the service had already been in full blast for half an hour and when we left at one in the morning the congregation, which by this time was asleep on its feet, was still being barangued by the Indian priest who showed no signs of coming to an end of his peroration. Even Wanda was impressed. "They would not stand for that in my country," she said. "Many would not stand at all."

"Now they are saying that it is snowing... Now that they are receiving many letters but they are not reading them because they are not able to do so. Please write more distinctly..." and so on.

In the evening we went to the cinema. The film was a gruesome musical comedy set amongst almond blossom in Kashmir. Soon we were fast asleep. It had been a long day.

It had begun at midnight on Christmas

At 11 o'clock on Christmas Day we went to "my" church. I had insisted on Wanda coming too, principally to have my own back on her for what she had inflicted on me.

The Memorial Church at Kanpur was nothing like the Memorial Church at Fatehpur. There was nothing dilapidated about it. Everything had the appearance of being constantly polished and burnished, from the varnished pews to the brass plaque in memory of General Sir Mowbray Thompson, K.C.I.E., late of the 53rd Native Infantry, the last survivor of the Massacre, who died in 1917.

The congregation consisted of some 20 of the British Colony and a number of Anglo Indians who made brave efforts to look their best; but although we sang lustily and amicably enough when we thought anyone was looking in our direction, it was no passport to the British colony and although, as the bank official had told Wanda previously when he cashed her cheque, everyone knew who we were and where we had come from, we walked out of the church without anyone saying a word to us.

"If they behaved like this with the Indians, then they deserved to be massacred," Wanda said.

From 'Slowly down the Ganges' by Eric Newby  
© HarperCollins

SHEILA PAINE, 1990, Pakistan

Sheila Paine travelled through the Hindu Kush in search of an embroidered amulet. Initially denied access to the closed-off Makran territory, she joined an Italian Archeological Mission that had been granted permission to study there over the winter



No chance of any wine, I suppose. JM? "Wine? No. No wine. Whisky. Black Dog."

"Not for Christmas. What about cognac?"

"What's that?"

"Brandy."

"Write it down."

I wrote "Cognac Grande Fine Napoléon" and drew a few stars.

JM returned, flushed with success, a newspaper packet under his arm. "Cognac Napoléon. Made in France," the label said and the screw top didn't appear to have been tampered with, though the cognac didn't taste quite right. We had it with almonds the boys had cracked with stones on the verandah of Circuit House.

Rashly I had offered to produce a Christmas dinner and ferreted around the bazaar to see what there was to buy. It wasn't promising. Some fruit and a few vegetables and nuts were available but the

grocers had only tea, sugar, baby milk, washing powder, eggs, rice, flour, lentils, spices, coconut oil, small cartons of milk, tinned peas, biscuits and absolutely nothing else. Gul Mohammed could produce a chicken. There were the dates that Ugo had left behind and Zobaida had given us one of the cherry cakes from Karachi. I whipped round to see what the others had brought with them from home, what they had thought essential in this wild outpost. Sheila contributed Marmite and a tape of carols; the boys had celery salt, Sasso olive

oil, black cherry jam, Elli coffee and some spaghetti they wouldn't part with. Kholiq had procured a packet of Kraft processed cheese. "And" said Sheila "you have to be very careful. Even with the rubbish they have to put up with here these Italians can be very fussy when it comes to something European. They won't eat things like ready-grated Parmesan. You should have heard Ugo. Parmigiano? Già preparato? Impossible! Non mangio."

We hung tinsel stars bought at the marriage shop on a branch of tamarisk, so that we had a Christmas tree and made little trees to eat, cut out of green halwa. In honour of the Italians we ate on Christmas Eve.

The boys had kept their spaghetti to serve us for Christmas Day lunch. Enough for five, they said, but there were to be 10 of us. Genoveffa had invited some Gichkis and hadn't told Gianni, who was having a fit in the kitchen when Captain Khalid arrived with three bottles of Smugglers.

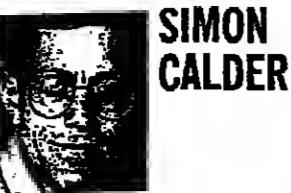
"This is our national dish," said Genoveffa proudly, indicating the spaghetti. She had not only omitted to tell anybody about the extra guests she had invited but had also done nothing about the meal.

From 'The Afghan Amulet' by Sheila Paine © Penguin (£6.99)



## travel

'Lottery regulator Peter Davis could have bought a six-journey pass on Delta Airlines for his US foray. It would have cost the taxpayer £515'



In a Yuletide spirit of generosity, I would like to offer some advice to Peter Davis – the man whose job it is to regulate the National Lottery. Mr Davis's liberal enjoyment of free flights on a business trip around the US, courtesy of a shareholder in Camelot and against the express wishes of the Department of National Heritage, created a chorus of demands for his resignation. And all because he wanted to save taxpayers' money.

Next time Mr Davis has business in the Land of the Freebie, I suggest he takes advantage of the excellent-value airpasses offered by US airlines to UK travellers. Instead of taking a series of free flights aboard Gfech's corporate jet, Mr Davis could have bought a six-coupon airpass on Delta Airlines. This allows the same itinerary as Mr Davis enjoyed – Dallas, Austin, Tallahassee, Atlanta, New York and Boston – yet would cost the taxpayer just £515.

Business travellers like Mr Davis might counter that they need the sort of flexibility you get only with full-fare tickets on scheduled airlines (or, indeed, a private jet). Fortunately, Delta's airpass is a fairly flexible friend. After the first sector, there is no penalty for changing your flights as often as you wish. You can do that with lottery numbers.

Which leaves the transatlantic stretch. The rock-bottom fare is about £200 on Air India, but given Mr Davis's professional interest in gaming, it seems appropriate to choose an airline that offers insight betting. I asked a North American fares expert, Jim Green of Quest Worldwide, to come up with a tempting deal for the lottery regulator. He can offer a London-Boston return on Virgin Atlantic for £249, including Air Passenger Duty (so the poor taxpayer at least gets some tax back). Mr Davis would be able to indulge in the seabank gambling available on all of Richard Branson's planes.

## WORLD DEPARTURES

Package holidaymakers are not the only ones who will pay more next summer. Independent travellers using charters face higher seat-only fares too – more than £200 for flights from Malaga in August, for example. To make life easier for late-night arrivals, Thomson Air Fares (reservations: 0121-252 3503) give the option of resort transfers, with a typical price of £12 for a bus ride from Alicante airport to Benidorm.

Free beer at the Heineken brewery, free food samples at Schiphol airport and the Amsterdam branch of M&S, and free music at the annual Park Pop festival in The Hague – all recommended in the *Cool Guide to Amsterdam* (£6.95). Subject matter veers toward sex, drugs and rock and roll, but it also suggests where to go.

rent a recumbent bicycle (the sort where you lie back and pedal).

The first exhibition devoted solely to the work of Johannes Vermeer will open in The Hague from 1 March to 2 June. Because demand is likely to be high, the Netherlands Board of Tourism is selling advance tickets; write to PO Box 523, London SW1E 6NT.

The most festive travel gesture of the year arrives on Christmas Day, courtesy of the Transport and General Workers' Union. Few buses are operating in London on Christmas Day, and all but one are charging unfestively high fares (minimum £1, no child reductions). But route 732, between Edgware and Cricklewood, is being sponsored by the T&G, and all travel is free.

# Win a weekend break

**Our first prize is a weekend in Iceland, including a tour of the island's natural wonders. Second prize is a break in Shetland – and a night at Britain's most northerly country house hotel.**

Though you might be living in a land of the midday gloom, the northern lights are only 25 answers and a few months away. The questions and the prizes this year in the *Independent's* Christmas travel competition celebrate the sell-off.

Reluctantly, Mr Almond set out to catch the Paddington train, which turned up 40 minutes late and had no heating. He wonders whether privatisation is responsible for this sorry state of affairs, too: "If BR managers are busy organising their management buy-outs, they presumably have less time and energy to run the railways. Should their bids succeed, no doubt they will start paying full attention to the trains once more and thereby proclaim the sell-off to be a success."

Wherever your travels lead over Christmas, as Bing Crosby (nearly) crooned – may your delays be merry and bright.

Aberdeen, Belfast, East Midlands, Edinburgh, Glasgow or Manchester courtesy of Business Air's scheduled services. A hire car and dinner, bed and breakfast at the UK's most northerly country house hotel, Busta House, will be arranged through Shetland Islands Tourism. For more information and bookings on Business Air's growing network of flights around the UK, call 01224 401349. For further details on Shetland Islands Tourism on 01959 693434. And for details about Busta House Hotel call 01806 522506.

First prize is an escorted weekend break for two in the Icelandic capital Reykjavik, courtesy of Arctic Experience. The winners will fly on Icelandair from Heathrow or Glasgow to Keflavik airport, from where they will be transferred to the comfortable and central Hotel Leifur Eriksson in Reykjavik for a three-night stay.

The prize includes a half-day city tour and a "Golden Circle" day trip of the island's natural wonders,

and normally costs around £450 per person. To find out more about the Arctic Experience programme of holidays to Iceland, Greenland and other northerly destinations, call 01737 218801.

To enter, write your answers on a piece of paper, together with your name, address and daytime telephone number and send it to Free Freeze, The Independent, 1

"do not list" to your address if you prefer not to be contacted; this will not affect your chances of winning the competition.



Shetland Islands Tourism

BUSINESS AIR

Top: Shetland Islands in Iceland. Below: Busta House Hotel, Shetland.



## NORTH AMERICA

15 Canadian city where Eddie "The Eagle" Edwards jumped to fame

16 Which is the largest island in North America?

17 The highest mountain in North America (both names required)?

18 Alaskan town that lent its name to an ill-fated tinker?

19 Which is furthest west? (a) North Dakota; (b) South Carolina; (c) North-West Territories

20 Which is closest to South Ronaldsay, Orkney? (a) Southwold; (b) Southend; (c) Southampton

## AND FINALLY

21 What is the biggest island in the Northern Hemisphere?

22 Which is furthest east? (a) North Ruislip; (b) West Ruislip; (c) South Ruislip

23 Which Alaskan town that lent its name to an ill-fated tinker?

24 Which is nearest the South Pole? (a) Yemen; (b) South Carolina; (c) Micronesia

25 Which is closest to South Ronaldsay, Orkney? (a) Southwold; (b) Southend; (c) Southampton

## The questions

### FOR STARTERS

1 From which island does the singer Björk hail?

2 "When I called you last night from \_". In which Scottish city were Abba for "Supertrouper"?

3 In the song "Cap in Hand", which Canadian province can The Proclaimers say without starting to stutter?

4 What geographical feature was celebrated in the 1977 Christmas No. 1?

5 This year saw a solar eclipse across Asia. But where, according to Carly Simon, did you fly "your Lear jet over -- to see a total eclipse of the sun"?

### SCOTLAND

6 Is the most popular tourist attraction in Scotland? (a) the Glenfiddich distillery; (b) New Lanark; (c) Edinburgh Castle

7 Which is NOT in Scotland? (a) Berwick; (b) North Berwick; (c) South Uist

8 Odd one out: (a) Cromarty; (b) Forth; (c) Malin; (d) Clyde.

9 Which of the following is the most northerly point in Scotland?

(a) Mullie Flugga; (b) Duncansby Head; (c) John O'Groats.

### THE NORDIC COUNTRIES

10 Which city has the busiest airport? (a) Copenhagen; (b) Reykjavik; (c) Oslo

11 In which country was much of *Dr Zhivago* filmed? (a) Finland; (b) Greenland; (c) Iceland

12 What is Europe's Capital of Culture for 1996?

13 By which other name is Svalbard known?

14 Which national team currently holds the European soccer championship?

15 Which is furthest west? (a) North Dakota; (b) South Carolina; (c) North-West Territories

16 Which is closest to South Ronaldsay, Orkney? (a) Southwold; (b) Southend; (c) Southampton

## X INDEPENDENT

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We've got you covered from just £45

The likelihood is that you may take several trips away in the course of a year. And, as the saying goes, "you can't go home again". So here's a chance to break on the content? A weekend channel trip to stand up to your own... Or maybe it's time to go to your... *Independent* offer?

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# money

For every genuine 'wonder stock' that crops up there are always plenty of opportunities to jump on the bandwagon after it has started rolling. You don't need to be there at the beginning to make a packet of money

**T**his is the time of year when the statisticians come out of the wood-work and give us their annual "what might have been" lecture. We will hear a lot in the next ten days about where we should have put our money this year if we had wanted to maximise our returns.

Newspapers and stockbrokers produce lists that summarise which shares did best and how the various asset classes (equities, bonds, property and so on) have fared over the last 12 months.

It is best to approach this annual, unforgiving exercise in a spirit of due humility. Hindsight is a wonderful thing, but as one well-known investor in my acquaintance puts it: "Anyone who drives a car with their eyes firmly fixed on the rear-view mirror is likely to end up hitting a wall."

There is only so much value you can learn from how things turned out in practice; and even less from aspiring to find the best of all conceivable investments in a year when

above-average performance would have served you more than adequately. As long as you avoided property and gold, and steered clear of construction shares and emerging markets, you will have probably have done fairly well in 1993, whatever you did.

I dare say that you, like me, were one of the millions who missed out on British Biotech – this year's best-performing share (up just over 200 per cent) – which may turn out to be what a number of excitable brokers are already calling the next Glaxo. Well, the only correct response to that is "too bad." There are worse disappointments in life than missing out on the early rise of a good share, even one which had discovered a potentially world-beating drug.

If you are one of those whom this does worry, experience suggests that the way to console yourself is to remember two things:

One is that every gain in the stock market has to be measured against the risk involved. Few of us have the



JONATHAN DAVIS  
INVESTMENTS

time or the knowledge required to find out what British Biotech does, let alone appreciate the commercial significance of any new compound it may have discovered. Investing in the company at this stage, before commercial and regulatory trials have established what its drugs can safely do, is a high-risk strategy. Those who are prepared to take on that risk have earned their 200 per cent gain. It does not mean that you should necessarily join them.

The second consoling thought is that for every gen-

ius "wonder stock" that crops up, there are always plenty of opportunities to jump on the bandwagon after it has started rolling. You don't need to be there at the beginning to make a packet of money out of it.

With the benefit of hindsight, you would need to have started buying Glaxo shares in the 1970s in order to maximise your return, but anyone who latched onto it in the 1980s – long after its ulcer drug Zantac was known about and indeed had started to be sold commercially – could still have done handsomely out of it. The shares have risen by the best part of 50 per cent this year alone, thanks to the success of the Wellcome takeover, which looks like turning out to be one of the corporate steals, not just of this past year, but of the decade as well.

Scanning through the lists of the most successful investments in 1993, two other things strike me. One is how confounded the so-called experts have again been this year. The consensus of opin-

ion among professional forecasters this time last year was, by and large, that this was going to be a fair but tough year for financial markets, with strong economic growth likely to require higher interest rates, particularly in the United States. I personally remember listening to one highly regarded US economist – a man with formidable connections in New York and Washington – confidently predicting in February that the Federal Reserve would have to raise US interest rates at least twice before the autumn to choke off demand.

In fact, not for the first time, the reverse of what the pundits expected has happened. Both the Fed in the States, and to a lesser extent European central banks, have all found themselves struggling to cope with a rather different phenomenon, namely a worrying slowdown in their economies which has left them cutting rather than raising interest rates. If there is one fundamental story in investment this year it has to be the general decline in

interest rates over the past year. The Fed, the German Bundesbank and the British authorities have all cut their rates in the last two weeks. While modest in themselves when combined with earlier cuts in the cost of money, the cumulative effect has been highly significant.

What is more, in addition

to the short-term rate changes made by governments and central banks, there is also an even more profound force at work – which I believe is also the second main lesson to be drawn from the year's events in the markets.

The interest rates that the

authorities can control

are short term ones.

But what really matters to investment markets are long-term interest rates. They ultimately determine how shares and other classes of financial asset are valued. They reflect what investors expect to happen over time to inflation and economic performance.

Governments cannot influence them directly. This year the yield on the US long bond – a 30-year government bond

## The worst the news the better for anyone looking to make good money out of recovery

By Alison Eadie

**T**he M&G Recovery Fund, launched in 1989 to buy the shares everyone else was selling, is now the UK's third largest unit trust with 150,000 unitholders and £1.1 billion under management. Its size limits manoeuvrability and presents a challenge, but not an impossible one, says its manager Richard Hughes. Big stakes and dramatic recoveries are needed to maintain outper-

formance, but so far the market keeps throwing up opportunities.

The fund's shares are currently languishing a little at 25p, after touching 35.5p earlier this year. But average annual compound growth since launch is 20 per cent and capital growth is the objective.

The philosophy of the fund has been refined over the years, says Mr Hughes,

but the starting point is still to look for companies in trouble. The bigger the bad news appears – preferably on the front page of the Financial Times – the better.

"Investors see bad news, panic and sell, I then look and start to do my work," says Mr Hughes.

First he has to decide if there is a solution, or if the company is in an irretrievable mess. If there is hope,

there must also be the prospect of the shares moving up strongly as problems are solved.

The three elements of recovery are usually a change of management, an injection of capital and the passage of time, explains Mr Hughes.

The passage of time theory, combined with a change of management, came spectacularly right in the case of Guinness. When Ernest Saunders left in disgrace and Sir Anthony Ternan went in to head a new team, the company was being threatened by a £1 billion lawsuit from Argyll.

A few years down the road, profits have rolled in, the shares have appreciated several-fold and the scandals of the past have faded into the background. From a low point of around 120p late in 1987 Guinness shares appreciated fivefold to touch 600p in 1992, although their subsequent performance has been more subdued and the shares this week are trading just below 460p.

The Recovery Fund by its nature courts the danger of holdings going bust. Some 23 have done just that in the life of the fund, a tally of almost one a year.

The biggest failures for Mr Hughes, who has managed the fund for eight years, were Lowndes Queensway and Davies &

Newman – each of which represented 1 per cent of total assets. However, he has avoided some of the biggest nasties of recent years including Polly Peck, British & Commonwealth and Coloroll.

The flipside to the danger of one of the investments going bust is the enhanced likelihood of a share being taken over, usually at a significant premium to the current market price at the time of the bid.

The fund's largest holding is presently TSB, whose shares have soared since the announcement of the merger with Lloyds Bank. From a low of 120p they soared to a peak of 417p and are still within touching distance of 440p.

Other winners this year have included Fisons, taken over by Rhone Poulenon, Kleinwort Benson, which was acquired by Dresdner Bank.

Despite the boost provided by takeovers, M&G has a house policy of not supporting hostile bids. They are expensive and often work out badly for both sides, says Mr Hughes.

"We accept agreed bids and bids which have gone unconditional, but we believe there are sound commercial reasons for not accepting hostile bids," he adds. He points to the examples of Molins and Birmid

Qualcast. Bolstered by a 17 per cent stake held by M&G Recovery Fund, Molins fought off five takeover attempts in four years, the last at 275p a share in 1990. Retaining its independence, the company has gone on to reach a high of 825p this year.

Birmid Qualcast, supported by M&G, saw off the first Blue Circle bid in 1988 at 360p a share, but then accepted the second a few months later at 450p.

As well as a time to buy, there is a time to sell. The fund holds investments for an average of five to six years, excluding takeovers stocks which tend to exit faster.

Sometimes the fund loses faith. Mr Hughes saw the writing on the wall for Ferranti and managed to sell many shares before the company collapsed.

Sometimes the fund makes mistakes. Mr Hughes points out that there is a virtuous circle associated with recovery stocks. As companies emerge from the

mire, investment rises, profits go up, morale improves and good people are attracted. Former "dogs" often go on to be stars.

It is important for the fund to capture at least some of that uplift, as the multiplier effect on a big stake is dramatic. The fund sold its 13 per cent stake in Standard Chartered Bank too soon, admits Mr Hughes, although it made a lot of money.

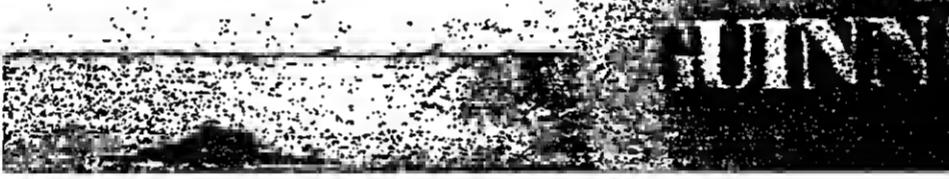
It is bought into the between 50p and 100p in 1991, after adjusting for the four-for-one share split, and sold into strength – but missed the spectacular rise of the last six months when the shares rocketed to a high of 625p, although it too has since come off, peaking at around 550p this past week.

Although the fund has no sector preferences, it tends to be overweight in manufacturing and light in oil and commodity stocks and people businesses. It is also biased towards medium and smaller companies with 70 per cent of its money outside the FTSE 100 companies.

Overseas holdings represent just 2 per cent of the fund and are unlikely ever to rise above 5 per cent, says Mr Hughes. "From time to time I'll dip overseas, if colleagues come up with a good idea," he says.

Mr Hughes is at his

Few years on from trouble, Guinness investors can again dance for joy



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Open our new TESSA and we'll guarantee you a tax-free, risk-free investment with interest rates rising every year starting at 6.00% in year 1, 6.25% year 2, 6.50% year 3, 7.00% year 4 and rising to 8.00% by year 5.

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**DUNFERMLINE BUILDING SOCIETY**

**Notice to Borrowers  
New Rates of Interest**

The rate of interest charged on existing variable rate mortgages will be decreased by 0.20% pa gross with effect from 1 February 1994.

Borrowers in the Budget Repayment Scheme do not require to take any action at this time.

Notices will be issued to borrowers outside the Scheme.

The Society's new basic rate is 7.49% pa gross.

Dunfermline Building Society Caledonia House Carnegie Avenue Dunfermline KY11 5PU Tel 01383 627727



### loose change

New Tessa from Northern Rock...

7 per cent on smaller balances over £3,000.

...from TSB

TSB is also launching a new fixed-rate Tessa, paying a guaranteed 7 per cent a year tax-free on amounts between £3,000 and the maximum of £9,000.

...and from A&A

Alliance & Leicester is offering a new variable rate Tessa, paying 6.1 per cent up to £3,000, rising to 6.5 per cent on amounts over £6,600 and 7.25 per cent on Tessas rolled over with Northern Rock, and an ini-

Mortgage cut

Yorkshire Building Society has cut its variable mortgage rate to a market-leading 7.39 per cent from next month.

Fixed rate home loans

Coventry Building Society is offering five year fixed-rate mortgages at 6.79 per cent for up to 85 per cent of valuation, with no penalty for early redemption. A discount of 1.45 per cent for four years is also available on variable rate mortgages, but in this case there is a six month penalty for early redemption.



## going out



STEPHEN WISDOM

It is 1660. Oliver Cromwell is dead. Samuel Pepys is busy with his diary. The Thames is as hard as a lump of stale plum pudding, and a Stuart king, Charles II, has been restored to the throne. Christmas, consigned to oblivion by the Puritan rule of the Commonwealth, has returned to the streets of the capital, and the people are in the mood to celebrate. "Christmas Restored" at the Museum of London is a trip back in time. The master of ceremonies is Sir Christemas (for Santa Claus has yet to be invented by the Coca-Cola company), and he will be holding sway over his wassailers, rowdy street-performers who teach 17th-century carols and dances, and – with a little help from the audience – perform a mumming play. If your child turns puce and sobs at the thought of performing in public, stay away. But for junior dragon-slayers or dragons, this is the perfect outing in the dog days between Boxing Day and New Year. It should restore not just Christmas but also frayed parents' nerves. Four shows a day by Izaak Caltrop (above), the story-telling, sedan-chair carrying puppet (as seen on *Blue Peter* last week) complete the museum's celebrations.

*Christmas Restored*, Museum of London, London Wall, London EC2Y (0171-600 3699) 27-31 Dec, 12.30pm and 1.45pm; free with admission to Museum. Suitable for 5-year-olds and upwards

## Six of the best: seasonal ballets

**Tales of Beatrix Potter** Originally a film made in 1971, the staged version of this Ashton ballet was greeted by one critic with an urgent call for Rentokil. Parents of small children felt otherwise and the ballet has proved a sell-out in every sense.

Royal Opera House, London WC2; £9.50-£49.50 & concs

**Cinderella** Matthew Hart's version of the ballet provides an ideal opportunity to dust down the paper taffeta and snap on the plastic tiara.

London City Ballet, Sadler's Wells, London EC1; £5-£30 & concs

**Les Patineurs** Ashton and Dean is showing in a double-bill at some performances of his *Tales of Beatrix Potter* (see above). The whizzing turns of the ice skater are mimicked tonight and next Friday by the human tornado, Tetsuya Kumakawa.

Royal Ballet, Royal Opera House, London WC2; £9.50-£49.50 & concs

**Peter Pan** Do you believe in fairies? Graham Lustig's version of Barrie's classic will do its best to persuade you. Scottish Ballet,

Theatre Royal Glasgow

**Les Patineurs** Ashton and Dean is showing in a double-bill at some performances of his *Tales of Beatrix Potter* (see above). The whizzing turns of the ice skater are mimicked tonight and next Friday by the human tornado, Tetsuya Kumakawa.

Royal Ballet, Royal Opera House, London WC2; £9.50-£49.50 & concs

## THEATRE

### WEST END CHOICE

**MURDER IN THE STREETS** (1) A gory Victorian mystery. *Death in the West End*

(0171-580 5555) Sat-Sun 2-15pm

**THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT** (1) The US-president falls in love. *Empty Love*

(0171-580 5555) Sat-Sun 2-15pm

**THE SORCERER** (1) A swashbuckling Hamlet. *The Sorcerer*

(0171-580 5555) Sat-Sun 2-15pm

**ANGELS AND INSECTS** (1) Adaptation of

Stevie Smith's *Men, Women and*

*Stephen Ward*

(0171-580 5555) Sat-Sun 2-15pm

**THE SANTA CLAUSE** (1) Tim Allen

as a man who's forced to take

on Santa's role. *The Santa Clause*

(0171-580 5555) Sat-Sun 2-15pm

**LA BELLE ET LE BETE** (1) Jean Cocteau's

klassicisation of the fairytale. *The Belle et le*

*et le Monstre*

(0171-580 5555) Sat-Sun 2-15pm

**THE SLEEPING BEAUTY** (1) A swashbuckling

Hamlet. *The Sleeping Beauty*

(0171-580 5555) Sat-Sun 2-15pm

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## Six of the best: Boxing Day walks

After a day of indoor festivities and feasting, Boxing Day is a time to get out and about. Many local branches of the Ramblers' Association organise walks, usually quite short and unstrenuous in the days after Christmas. Here are six of the best for 26 December and next week we shall list six more for the New Year weekend. Anyone is welcome. Call the numbers given in the event of dodgy weather, or for further information.

**Whitstable, Kent** An easy five-mile walk including coast and country. Meet 10.30am in the car park near All Saints Church (01843 581051)

**Farnham, Surrey** Choose the morning or the afternoon for a five-mile walk across fields and woodland. Meet 10.30am or 1.30pm at the Parrot Inn, Shalford (01252 316304/ 722541)

**Buckland, Oxon** A choice of two routes – seven miles or four-and-a-half in the Vale of the White Horse. Meet 10am at Buckland village hall (01367 241384)

**Totteridge, Greater London** An afternoon walk of between five and six miles around the pretty Totteridge Valley. Meet 1.30pm at Totteridge and Whetstone tube station on the Northern Line (0181-445 9958)

**Portishead, Avon** A five-mile walk around the town and on the coastal path, with a couple of hills. Meet 10am at the south end of the Esplanade (01275 848663)

**Merthyr Tydfil, Mid Glamorgan** A five-mile route highlighting the changing face of Merthyr Tydfil. Meet 11am at Rhydycar car park (01443 833719)

## Talent stable

Not content with feeding lions and hosing down elephants, keepers at London Zoo are performing in a living nativity play. The multi-skilling keepers will support the real stars of the show – animals drawn from the zoo's own extensive talent stable. Organisers have resisted the temptation to make the baby Jesus's animal visitors more exotic by opting for a tropical bird theme and instead stuck with a traditional Israeli farmyard selection. Four-legged thespes include Nina the camel and Tutti Frutti the donkey, with walk-on parts for sheep and goats. Other roles are filled by the audience, who are taken backstage to learn their lines before appearing alongside the furry cast members. After the nativity there's the chance to meet another star player in the animal world, as Chrissie the reindeer makes a special guest appearance.

*London Zoo, Regent's Park, London NW1 (0171-449 6235) today 2pm. Adults £10, children £8*

# Christmas than television



## Six of the best: Santa specials

**The Primrose Line Santa Express South Devon Railway, The Station, Buckfastleigh, Devon (01364 642338) today, 30, 31 Dec & 1 Jan** Buckfastleigh to Totnes via the North Pole and back again on a full-size steam train. Children can visit Santa's grotto – an entire carriage filled with "snow". Adults £6, children £4

**Didcot Railway Centre Santa Express Didcot, Oxfordshire (01235 817200) today & 24 Dec** All children receive presents according to their age – soft toys for the youngest, puzzles and colouring kits for the older children. After the grotto, visit the locomotive museum and ride on other steam trains. Adults, children £5

**Mid-Hants Railway Alresford Station, Alresford, Hants (01962 733810) today & 24 Dec** Father Christmas's steam train shuttles between Alton and Alresford; on the way children can visit him to pick up a present. Adults, children £6.50

**East Anglian Railway Museum Chappel Station, Colchester (01206 242524) 24 Dec** Two large steam trains are available for rides, one carrying Father Christmas with his sack of presents – cuddly toys, frisbees and modelling clay. Parents can relax with mince pies and sherry. The entry fee includes entry to the museum but the miniature railway is an extra 40p. Adults £5.50, children under-four £2.50

**Buckinghamshire Railway Centre Quainton Rd Station, Aylesbury, Bucks (01296 655720)** Today & 24 Dec Visits last two hours and include a steam trip, standard or first class, during which Santa and his pixies hand out presents. After the train comes a magic show and a ride on the miniature railway. Standard £6, first class £7

**Nene Valley Railway Wansford Station, Stibbington, Peterborough, Cambs (01780 782854)** Children meet Santa at his grotto in front of the station, where he hands out presents before herding them onto the steam train with his elves. The journey lasts an hour and is a round trip via Peterborough. £7, under-twentys £3.50



## ROCK ANGELA LEWIS

**London Community Gospel Choir** Live outing for the halleujah chorus television stars (recently on *Noel's House Party* and *GMTV*). They promise an evening of gospel music and carols given a gospel flavour. *London Jazz Cafe, London SW1 (0171-731454) Tonight 8pm, £21*

**Southampton** Zoot Money's Big Bad Blue and boogie-woogie from the well-travelled piano man. *The Studio, Fonthill Road (01725-835561) Tonight 8pm, £22*

**St Albans** The New Scottish rockers play *Hendrix*. *House of Blues, St Albans Street (01727-831454) Tonight 8pm, £15*

**Stone**

The New Orleans Black'n'Teal sit on the team. *Costello's, St Albans Road (01725-831664) Tonight 8pm, £15*

**Tunbridge Wells**

Two more rock wonders. *Frontline, The Common (01992-534111) Tonight 8pm, phone for price*

**Wickham**

The New York blues-rockers. *Boat's Head, Wickham (01392-832641) Tonight 8pm, phone for price*

**Wheatsheaf**

Blues II rock heavy funk. *Allegro!, Theatre (01942-625328) Tonight 8pm, £17, cones £4.50*

**jazz, world, folk etc**

**London** Eddie Rabbitt's US tour. *Eddie Rabbitt, London (0171-534111) BR Barnes Bridge, Tonight 8pm, £15*

Latin American salsa band. *Cafe Rabelais, The Gallery, Hanover SW1 (0171-850 0833) ♦ Vandell, Tonight 8pm, £17, cones £5*



## CLASSICAL ROBERT MAYCOCK

Anybody still needing an annual fix of Messiah is in luck: one of the best comes last. James Bowman, David Wilson-Johnson and Emma Kirkby all feature in the line-up with the chorus and orchestra of Polyphony. *St John's Smith Sq, London SW1, 7.30pm tonight*

**Perse & the Latin Sons Brothers' Lamentation from Harmonia** *Arc, Gielgud Theatre NW1 (0171-344 0044) ♦ Camden Town, Sun 7pm, £12, £10 concessions, £8, cones £5, tickets £10, 2pm Sat matinée, £8.50*

**Freight & the Latin Sons Brothers' Lamentation from Harmonia** *St John's Smith Sq, London SW1, 7pm, £12, £10 concessions, £8, cones £5, £10 Sat matinée, £8.50*

**London** *Latin Voices Christmas Concert Music*, an evening of carols and surprises for all the family in the pre-Christmas concert. *Today 3pm, £9.50*

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# jumbo crossword by Mass

## Cryptic

### Across

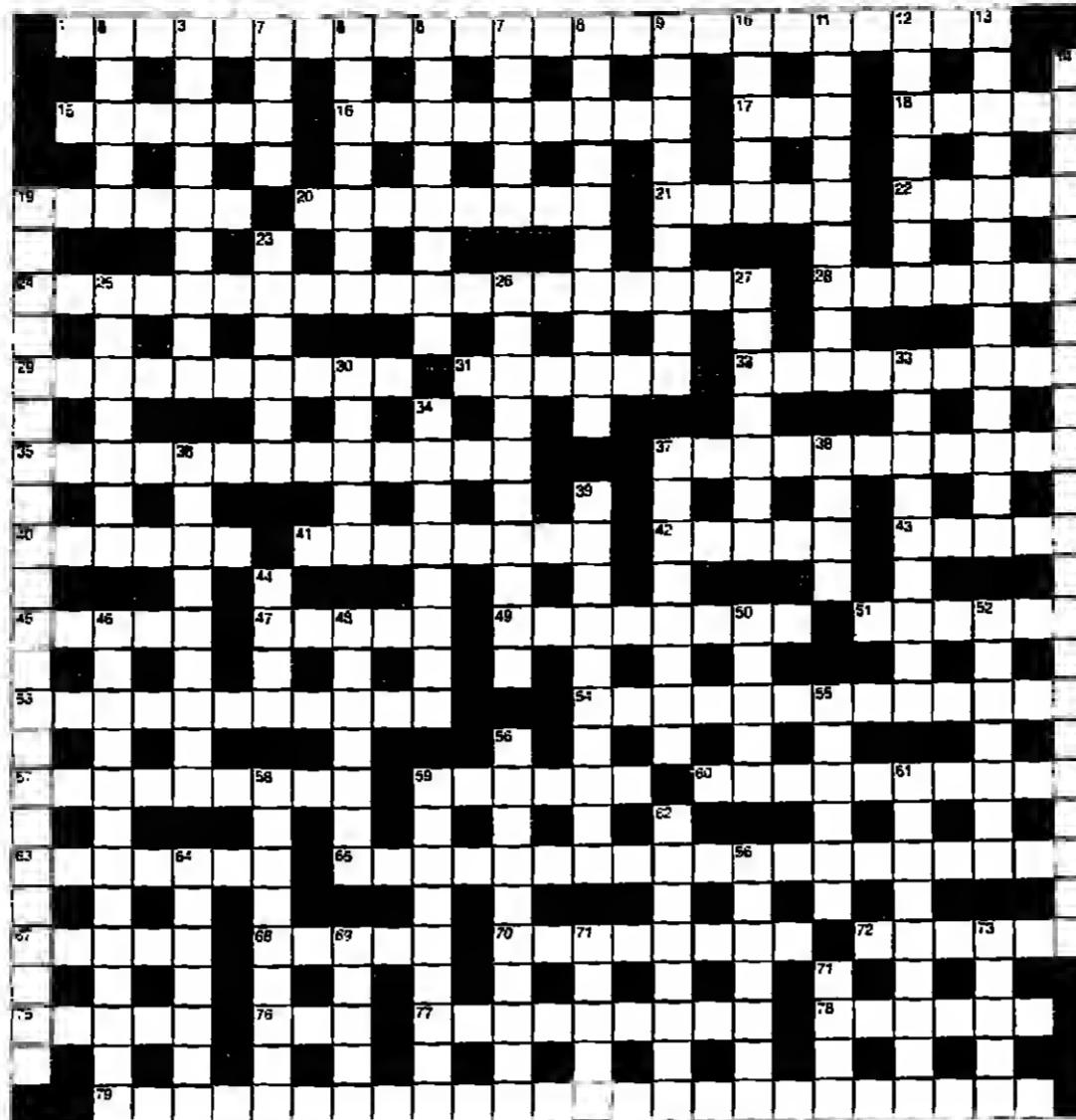
1 Overloads, endangers a branch of the Christmas tree? (5,3,6,2,4,4)  
 15 A decoration's no good kept in package (6)  
 16 Record of drinks etc. Benedictines, on reserve (5-4)  
 17 Spot in Judaea gains a religious leader (5)  
 18 Spread, liberal, causing rumble! (5)  
 19 Decay consumed wheel (6)  
 20 Inhibitory mechanism, before entering drink bout (8)  
 21 Trick broadcast on radio (5)  
 22 Yellowish facing removed from slight arch (5)  
 24 I dine with Scrooge? All is transformed without former dad? (6,2,8,5)  
 28 Crank with toy in hand (7)  
 29 Such contents give more than one book a name! (5-3)  
 31 Beams right off course (6)  
 32 I go with cop, led as framed! (6-2)  
 35 Second-floor beds absorbing Sunday's expenses? (18)  
 37 Near terminus (vaguely) with nowhere to go (2,1,5,3)  
 40 Twisting? Caught out, offering bribes (6)  
 41 Romanian province, kingdom old aviator discovers (8)  
 42 Brown's out of practice (5)  
 43 Ben is producing a dramatist (5)  
 45 Peasant right by Russian river (5)

47 Home help's back in the country (5)  
 49 A good place to be on Boxing Day! (8)  
 51 Cur, heard to throw up (16)  
 53 Athlete's injected with confidence, and flies (11)  
 54 Showing great determination? Idle rake might, with changes (4,4,5)  
 57 Acting as backer, or second, in conclusion (4)  
 59 Vehicle making for bar (16)  
 60 Observed going around, drifting, bringing in Yuletide (11)  
 63 Former philosopher, dead, is unearthed (7)  
 65 The endless tangs of perfume might identify the Magi? (5,5,2,7)  
 67 Meets targets (5)  
 68 Tree seen from lake on bend (5)  
 70 Note bench and sit down again (8)  
 72 Youngster with favourite doll (6)  
 73 Brass animal (5)  
 76 Nail bar back (3)  
 77 One showing withdrawal symptoms, perhaps? (9)  
 78 Important old city man (6)  
 79 The purpose of the stocking? (2,4,5,4,3,4)

### Down

2 University selected! Reportedly not fit (5)  
 3 Period for vocal piece to pour forth heavenwards (5-4)  
 4 Fur's said to be a seasonal decoration (4)  
 5 Point to elope, unusually articulate (7)  
 6 Papal accommodation? (8)  
 7 Grave's perched by grand funeral song (5)  
 8 Spent less on comedies, maybe (10)  
 9 Favour shots involving edge (4,5)  
 10 Spout, one time east in crude metal (5)

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## Concise

### Across

1 The Bard's line in winter fashion (4,7,2,3,4)  
 3 Rag dealer? (9)  
 4 Cook (4)  
 5 Hallmarks (7)  
 6 Prevarication (8)  
 7 African animal (5)  
 8 Candie, for example (5-5)  
 9 Barely hit (anag) (9)  
 10 A pickle (5)  
 11 In three (9)  
 12 Healthy sporting type (7)  
 13 They house horses for hire (6,7)  
 14 Card opening (1,6,4,2,9)  
 15 Evoking higher regard (6,2,4,10)  
 23 Resident assistant doctor (6)  
 25 Baffle (7)  
 26 Indecisive (10)  
 27 Milky foods (7)  
 30 Eg. 24a (5)  
 33 Out of earshot (9)  
 34 Ancestor (8)  
 36 Dire omens (anag) (9)  
 37 Highly-glazed pottery (8)  
 38 Innkeeper (4)  
 39 Lullaby (6-4)  
 44 Wooden shoe (4)  
 46 Mary's song of praise (3,10)  
 48 A symptom of the cold? (7)  
 50 Tours (anag) (5)  
 52 Job opportunity (7)  
 55 Means of entry (6)  
 56 Leaky house-plant (10)  
 58 Ultimate unbearable factor (4,5)  
 59 Important historical event (9)  
 61 A mince-pie, say (9)  
 62 To initiate (5,3)  
 64 Witness (7)  
 66 Capture again (7)  
 69 Balthazar's mount, perhaps (5)  
 71 Vaudeville acts (5)  
 73 One of the Hollywood crowd? (5)  
 74 The Wise Men (4)

### Down

2 Biblical king (5)  
 3 Rag dealer? (9)  
 4 Cook (4)  
 5 Hallmarks (7)  
 6 Prevarication (8)  
 7 African animal (5)  
 8 Candie, for example (5-5)  
 9 Barely hit (anag) (9)  
 10 A pickle (5)  
 11 In three (9)  
 12 Healthy sporting type (7)  
 13 They house horses for hire (6,7)  
 14 Card opening (1,6,4,2,9)  
 15 Evoking higher regard (6,2,4,10)  
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 66 Capture again (7)  
 69 Balthazar's mount, perhaps (5)  
 71 Vaudeville acts (5)  
 73 One of the Hollywood crowd? (5)  
 74 The Wise Men (4)

The first correct cryptic solution pulled from the sack will win the Oxford English Dictionary on CD-Rom, worth £580. Three cryptic runners up will receive the Oxford Reference shelf and the Oxford Compendium on CD-Rom, each worth £79.99. The first correct concise solution picked will win a complete set of the Oxford Illustrated Dickens (worth £150). Five concise numbers up will receive paperback copies of 'A Christmas Carol'. Mark your envelopes: 'Concise Jumbo Crossword' or 'Cryptic Jumbo Crossword', and send them to: PO Box 7293, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5QQ. Entries to arrive by Wednesday 10 January. Solutions and winners' names will appear on Saturday 13 January.



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# Christmas Day Television and Radio

Film choice  
by James Rampton



**M**ore Spielberg flies onto our screens in the shape of *Hook* (+3.00pm BBC1), his schmaltzy reading of JM Barrie's *Peter Pan* (Rufus Williams). Julia Roberts is as insubstantial as her character, Tinkerbell, but Dustin Hoffman, several miles over the top in the title role, will have you hissing and booing in the best pantomime tradition.

Playing in the "Beastly Christmas" season, *Turtle Diary* (7pm C4) reminds us what a loss to acting Glenda Jackson's election as an MP was. She plays a lonely middle-aged woman who shares an interest with Ben Kingsley in liberating giant turtles from a zoo. Screenwriter Harold Pinter pops up as Man in Bookshop.

In *Sister Act* (8pm ITV), Whoopi Goldberg has a whale of a time as a

streetwise woman placed by the police in a nursery for her own protection after witnessing a murder by her boyfriend (Hollywood's rent-a-hitsman, Harvey Keitel). Maggie Smith earns some easy money playing the Mother Superior.

Showing in the "BBC 100" series,

*Farewell My Concubine* (10pm BBC2) comes with the cachet of having twice been banned by the Chinese authorities. It deals with the sexual confusion experienced by Douzi (Leslie Cheung) against a backdrop of political turmoil.

There was something of a storm when Sky's saucy poster advertising *Indecent Proposal* (10.10pm BBC1) was pulled. Sadly, Adrian Lyne's glossy film about whether Demi Moore will sleep with Robert Redford for a million dollars offers little that's as provocative.

In *Scenes from a Mall* (11pm ITV), Paul Mazursky's slick drama, Woody Allen plays a sports lawyer whose marriage to a psychotherapist (Bette Midler) begins to fray at the edges on a Christmas shopping trip to a Beverly Hills mall.

Television choice  
by Gerard Gilbert

**T**he rumour is, of course, that Victor Meldrew puts his other foot in the grave in this year's seasonal special *of One Foot in the Grave* (9pm BBC1) – and BBC have cleverly stoked the rumour by withholding all preview cast-sheets of the episode. The last time they did this was over Princess Diana's *Panorama* confessional.

The odd shopping list or betting slip aside, England, My England (9.05pm C4) is the last thing written by John Osborne. This imaginative, multi-layered tale of composer Henry Purcell co-written by Charles Wood but carrying all the hallmarks of its director, Tony Palmer, contains some of the most bizarre casting this side of panto, including former *EastEnders* barmaid

Letitia Dean, Antonia Sanchez and, as Purcell, boyish singer Michael Ball. Simon Callow plays Charles II and an actor called Charles. Yes, I know my dears, but bear with it. It's all in the edit.

The *Abbey* (9pm BBC2) is a very funny – in an understated, Alan Bennett sort of way – new version of *Abbey*, complete with the same cast, and so forth, while the amateur who eavesdrops on the vicarage in *Queer's Parish* (chart) has John Gladstone being especially good. The bemused Japanese tourist is one of the comedy high spots of the season.

A repeat, I know, but many of you might have missed writer Nick Dear



## BBC 1

6.00 Children's BBC: *Puddington Peas*. 6.05 *Bump's Christmas Story*. 6.15 *Moomin*. 6.40 *White Christmas*. 7.10 *Playdays*. 7.30 *PJ's Unfunny/Bunny Christmas*. 7.55 *McGee and Me*. 8.15 *The Flintstones*. 9.25 *Movie Game*.

10.00 *Christmas Day in the Morning*. Carols, readings and prayers from *Heaven*. Guests include Sir Harry Secombe, Ruth Madoc and Casanova's Cleve Mantle (S1/2305/5).

10.55 **Film** *The Neverending Story* (Wolfgang Petersen 1984 US). Entering fairy tale about a lonely boy who enters an alternative world through a story book (7334/36).

12.25 *Neighbours* (S1/5075/29).

12.50 *News, Weather* (1206/212).

12.55 *Top of the Pops*. Bjork and Jack Dee present the usual look back at 1995, and unveil the Christmas number one (S1/1258/59).

1.55 *Only Fools and Horses*: *Christmas Special* from 1992 (F1/S1/412581/6).

3.00 *The Queen*. Her message to the Commonwealth (S1/7402/231).

3.10 *Noel's Christmas Presents*. Noel Edmonds, Cliff Richard, *Richard and more than 100 children*. Haven't you got anything better to do? (S1/1255/157).

4.20 *News, Weather* (8628019).

4.30 **Film** *Hook* (Steven Spielberg 1991 US). Dire Spielberg version of the Peter Pan story with peculiar "Iron John" undertones. The kids will be baffled. Robin Williams is the grown-up Peter, whose two children are kidnapped by Dustin Hoffman's Captain Hook (S1/5355/106).

6.45 *Auntie's Brand New Bloomers* (S1/6508/16).

7.30 *EastEnders*. First of two visits (S1/3001).

8.00 *Keeping Up Appearances*. Hyacinth gets to grips with a mobile phone (S1/5351).

8.30 *EastEnders*. Second slice of Christmas grief, and Pauline receives a distressing call from the prison (S1/5145/6).

9.00 *One Foot in the Grave*. Or is it two? (S1/7564).

10.00 *News, Weather* (S1/3033).

10.10 **Film** *Indecent Proposal* (Adrian Lyne 1993 US). Robert Redford proves he has more money than taste by offering \$1 million to sleep with Demi Moore. But can Demi's marriage to Woody Harrelson survive such trauma? High-concept, low-involvement thrills (S1/5353).

12.00 *I Hate Christmas*. Poetic meditation on the spirit of Christmas (5105/57).

12.05 *The Greatest Music Party in the World*. Recorded last month at the NEC Birmingham, with Rod Stewart, David Bowie, Echobelly and Alanis Morissette (S1/5809/40).

1.35 *Weather* (12787336). To 1.40am.

## BBC 2

7.05 *Christmas with Cliff* (R) (S1) (5338903). \*

7.45 **Film** *A Christmas Carol* (Edwin L Marin 1988 US). Reginald Owen plays Scrooge in this unexpected version of Dickens's tale (9365/90). \*

8.50 **Film** *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* (Richard Fleischer 1954 US). A fine cast – Kirk Douglas, James Mason (as Captain Nemo) and Peter Lorre – enlivens this handsome Disney version of the Jules Verne story (50177038). \*

10.55 **Top Gear RAC Rally Special** (S1/151783). \*

11.40 *Events in Trust*. The National Trust's 50th anniversary, celebrated in uncritical style (R) (S1/5855/477). \*

12.55 *The Hills Are Alive: The Sound of Music Phenomenon*. An exploration of the enduring appeal of *The Sound of Music* (3347187).

1.35 *Victory Stiffs*. People who took part in VE Day 1945, captured on camera (96747800). \*

1.55 *Memories and Celebrations*. 50th anniversary commemorations of VE and VJ Days (4123458).

3.00 *Trick on Two*. Magicians reveal their trade secrets (F1/2305/51).

3.10 *La Bohème*. Australian Opera version of Puccini's love story, set in 1950s Paris (S1/2379651).

5.05 *Today's the Day Christmas Special* (2140767).

5.35 *Some Enchanted Evening*. Julie Andrews introduces a tribute to lyricist Oscar Hammerstein (S1/5827632).

7.00 *Screen Two: Persuasion*. Another chance to see Roger Michell's superb screen version of Jane Austen's classic – and to compare it (it's better) to *Pride and Prejudice* (R) (S1/22653/77).

8.40 *Close Up*. Richard Attorborough on a scene from Charlie Chaplin's *City Lights* (S1/752564).

8.50 *The Queen*. Her Christmas message to the Commonwealth (R) (S1/743816).

9.00 *The Abbey with Alan Bennett*. The first in an excellent series in which Alan Bennett proves a tart guide to Westminster Abbey, beginning by looking at the building's close association with royalty (S1/5106). \*

10.00 **Film** *Farewell My Concubine* (Chen Kaige 1993 Hong Kong/China). Bold, sweeping and intelligent tale of two Peking Opera actors over 50 years of China's recent history (S1/1859748).

12.30 *Rowan and Martin's Laugh In – 25th Anniversary Special*. Compilation includes snippets of guests Cher, Peter Sellers, Tony Curtis, Michael Caine and Richard Nixon (R) (S1/29084). \*

1.30 **Film** *A Night at the Opera* (Sam Wood 1935 US). "You big bully, why aren't you hitting that little bully?" and other classic lines, as the Marx Brothers meet Margaret Dumont and her cultured chums (43930). To 4.00am.

## ITV/London

6.00 *GMTV*. News. 6.05 Special Feature. 7.00 News. 7.05 *Barney*. 7.30 *Tom & Jerry Kids*. 8.00 *Galaxy High*. 8.30 *Starla and the Jewel Riders*. 8.55 *Power Rangers*.

9.25 *Christmas Morning Worship*. Roman Catholic Mass from Arundel Cathedral in Sussex (6073554).

10.25 *The Little Engine That Could*. Animation (S) (2355908).

11.00 *Bugs Bunny* (3632).

11.30 **Film** *Hedge Rides Again* (Robert Stevenson 1974 US). The friendly Volkswagen takes on property developers in *Low Bug* sequel (81661816).

1.05 *Disney Carlton* (R) (44958767).

1.15 *News, Weather* (26735564). \*

1.25 *Cavalcade Street* (R) (44120309). \*

1.35 *Tale That at Earl's Court*. First of a two-part recording of the boys' London concerts from earlier this year (4143212).

3.00 *The Queen* (S) (5602859). \*

3.10 **Film** *Ghostbusters II* (Ivan Reitman 1999 US). Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd, Sigourney Weaver and Rick Moranis reassembled for bigger effects and predictable laughs (S1/99157564). \*

5.00 *News, Weather* (6358528).

5.05 *The Wind in the Willows*. Lavish animated version of Kenneth Grahame's tale, featuring the voices of Alan Bennett (Mole), Michael Palin (Rat), Michael Gambon (Badger) and Rik Mayall (Toad) (S1/749729). \*

6.30 *Christmas in Coronation Street*. Steve McDonald and the case of the stolen whisky (24748). \*

7.30 *Robson and Jerome*. Christmas Special. Say no more! (496).

8.00 **Film** *Sister Act* (Emile Ardolino 1992 US). Good-natured, underhanding comedy, with murder witness Whoopee Goldberg taking refuge in an inner-city nunnery and turning the sisters on (72310545). \*

9.55 *News, Weather* (984477).

10.00 *Outside Edge*. Christmas Special for the cricketing sitcom. The boys and their wives go on a cricketing trip to Corfu (S1/2019). \*

11.00 **Film** *Scenes from a Mall* (Paul Mazursky 1990 US). Wacky, dyspeptic comedy in which Woody Allen and Bette Midler's marriage falls apart while they're not shopping (S1/8005/45). \*

12.35 **Film** *Trenchcoat* (Michael Tuchner 1983 US). Mystery author Margaret Kidder finds herself in a real-life adventure (S1/289620).

2.15 **Film** *Carbouche* (Philippe de Broca 1962 Fr/It). Jean-Paul Belmondo swashbuckles through 18th-century France (373978). To 4.15am.

## Channel 4

6.45 *Ulysses 31* (R) (7016599).

7.05 *The Adventures of Oz* (4717309).

7.35 *Little Dracula* (R) (7325309).

8.00 *The Big Breakfast*. Christmas Special with Eternal, Billy Crystal, Barbara Windsor and Gloria Gaynor (67019).

10.00 *Saved by the Bell* (R) (2337039). \*

10.25 *Showtime: Blair in Concert*. Recorded at Alexandra Palace (R) (2397274).

11.25 *A Christmas Carol*. Oscar-winning animated version, with the voices of Michael Redgrave, Alastair Sim and Michael Hordern (7107477).

11.55 *Prince Chinders*. Animated version with a male Cinderella and voiced by Jennifer Saunders, Jonathan Ross and Lenny Henry (R) (7685361).

12.25 *Beauty* (S228458).

12.35 *Christian Rose Special*. Ecstatic young Christians get in the groove (7601767).

1.25 **Film** *Elenna* (Steve Gough 1992 UK). Pascale Delafosse plays a Welsh girl with Italian parents, feeling ostracised in the Valleys of World War Two, who meets a young, crash-landed German airman (3618554). \*

3.00 *The Alternative Christmas Message*. Bridget Bardot talks on behalf of the animals (312106).

3.15 *Heroes of Comedy*. Being Terry Hallcock, Frankie Howard, Benny Hill, Les Dawson, Morecambe and Wise and Paul Merton (R) (4171774).

5.45 *Coping with Christmas* (822749).

6.30 *The Queen* (S) (2686351). \*

6.30 *The Snowman*. *It's Christmas on TV* – this is must be Raymond Briggs (654).

7.00 **Film** *Turle Diary* (John Irvin 1985 UK). Comedy middle-agers Ben Kingsley and Glenda Jackson join forces to liberate turtles from a zoo. Harold Pinter wrote the script (S1/3239251).

8.45 *The Other Christmas Story*. Michael Starke, Sined in *Brookside*, with an alternative Christmas tale (499458).

9.05 *England, My England*. John Osborne's last screenplay, co-written with Charles Wood, and directed by Tony Palmer in his inimitable style, marking the 30th anniversary of Henry Purcell's death (S1/93856380).

12.00 **Film** *How to Steal a Million* (William Wyler 1966 US). High jinxes heist movie set in the Paris art world, with Audrey Hepburn hiring detective Peter O'Toole to steal her father's forged Cézanne Venus (61275133). \*

2.20 **Film** *Sentimental Journey* (Walter Lang 1946 US). Terminal ill actress Maureen O'Hara adopts a young orphan as a companion for her husband. Not sure it would be allowed these days (577336).

4.00 *Rawhide* (932572). To 4.55am.

## ITV/Regions

ANGLO  
As London

TYNE TEE/YORKSHIRE  
As London

CENTRAL  
As London

NW  
As London

MERSEY  
As London

WEST COUNTRY  
As London

S4C  
As C4 except 7.05am *The Adventures of T-Rex* (4717309); 10.00 *Saved by the Bell* (2337039); 10.25 *Little*

*Father Christmas* (714771); 12.00 *Father Christmas* (33903); 1.00 *Star Weather* (7325309); 1.30 *Film* *Her Royal Coat* (73244635); 3.30 *Her Majesty the Queen's Christmas Message* (3487922); 3.45 *5 Pump, Y'Den Naff, Dollyn Y Dail* (904038); 4.00 *Pumpkin*; *Round a Round* (8614361); 5.50 *Newyddion 6* (546090); 6.00 *Llys Lloys*; *Olsoffs: Pwy Sylw*; *Dwad o'r Bryn*. Over-indulgence during the afternoon party has an adverse effect on the *Nativity Play* (419222); 7.30 *Pobol y Cwm* (G651); 7.30 *Breiddyd y Roc a'r Rhi* (95322361); 9.05 *Nadolig Bryn Terfel* (278125); 10.05 *Dame Ednas Christmas Experience* (2205748); 11.10 *Whose Line Is It Anyway?* (572019); 11.40-1.30am *Film* *Kill Me Again*. John Dahl's homage to film noir. Joanne Whalley Kumar is a femme fatale who pays a down-on-his-luck private eye (Val Kilmer) to fake her death after she double-crosses her Mafia boss lover. Also starring Michael Madsen and Jonathan Gries (713038).

## Radio

### Choice

The nature of happiness explored in *Don't Worry, Be Happy* (10.05pm R4). The nature of Pogies explored in *Trumpington Riots* (12noon R4).

9.00 *Brian Way's Sunday Morning*. 12.30 Full Score.

1.00 *Music of the Month*. *Isle Songbook*. 1.15 *Firsts*. Isle of Purbeck, producer: the composer Albert Rönnqvist. 1.45 *The Sunday Concert*. BBC Philharmonic/Edward Downes. Wagner: Overture; Rienzi, Dvořák: Symphony No 9 in E minor. 2.50 *Spirit of the Age*. David Maloney plays talk about French keyboard music of the early 18th century. 3.50 *Brandenburg Concerto*. Alfred Brendel (piano). Beethoven: Sonata in G, Op 79; Sonata in F sharp, Op 78; Sonata in D, Op 28. (Interval: Edwin Fischer on tempo and metronome.) J Beethoven: Sonata in E minor, Op 90; Sonata in E flat, Op 7. 5.45 *Sunday Feature: Hide and Seek*. A search for the philosopher Banchi Spinoza. 6.30 *Enescu*. Piano Quintet in D minor, Op 30.

7.00 *Prom News 1995*. 7.30 BBC Proms 1995. Live from the Royal Albert Hall. Choir of New College Oxford, King's Consort, The Choral Society, King's College Cambridge, Jerusalem Clarke, Orchestra on Purcell's death: Come, come along, Purcell. Haar my prayer, O Lord. Sue Minter, curator of the Chelsea Physic Garden, strolls through the 17th century grounds with Hugh Walters. Blow Ode on the Death of Mr Henry Purcell. Purcell: Remember not, Lord, our offences; Funeral Music for Queen Mary.

9.40 *The Sunday Play: Waiting for Godot*. Samuel Beckett's epochal play with Alan Howard as Vladimir and Michael Maloney as Estragon. 11.30-12.30am *Interpretations on Record*.

Radio 4

6.30 *Country Feature: Hide and Seek*. A search for the philosopher Banchi Spinoza. 7.00 *News*.

7.15 *On Your Farm*.

7.40 *Sunday*.

8.50 *The Week's Good Cause*.

9.00 *Weather*.

9.10 *Sundays*.

9.15 *Letter from America*.

9.30 *Morning Service*.

10.00 *The Archers*.

11.00 *(LW) Test Match Special*.

11.15 *(FM) Charismatic*.

11.45 *(FM)*

staying in

# Christmas Eve Television and Radio

## Film choice

by James Rampton

For those many people unable to get tickets for the stage revival, Carol Reed's film version of Oliver (10.15pm BBC1) might provide some compensation in the multi-Oscar-winning interpretation of the Lionel Bart musical. Ron Moody makes for a memorable Fagin while Mark Lester (now, I believe, an osteopath) is suitably cute as the boy who dares to ask for more.

The remake of *Miracle on 34th Street* (2pm C4), with Richard Attenborough, may be selling like hot mince pies in the video stores, but it's not a patch on the original George Seaton's 1947 classic stars Edmund Gwenn as a department-store Santa claiming to be the Real McCoy.



Grace Kelly comes over all claustrophobic

A Bond film has become as traditional as turkey at Christmas. This year's is *The Spy Who Loved Me* (3.40pm ITV), in which Roger Moore takes on the metal-toothed Jaws (Richard Kiel), the best baddie this side of *Goldfinger's* Oddjob.

Spielberg may be accused of sentimentality, but he certainly knows how to move children, as delightfully proven by *ET the Extra-Terrestrial* (3.40pm BBC1).

Groucho Marx once remarked: "We been around so long I can remember Doris Day before she was a virgin." Day projects that familiar sense of recollection to pleasing effect in *Move Over, Darling* (8.45pm C4), where she plays a woman presumed dead in a plane crash, who reappears to discover her husband (James Garner) about to marry another woman.

In *Rear Window* (12.50am BBC1), James Stewart and Grace Kelly investigate suspicious goings-on at a neighbour's. Stewart's immobility only adds to the feeling of claustrophobic intensity.

## Television choice

by Gerard Gilbert

Once upon a time, the animator who seemed to have Christmas wrapped up for himself was Raymond Briggs, of *The Snowman* (8.45pm BBC1) is not murderous, blessed with a wonderfully relaxed performance by Peter O'Toole as the Earl of Emsworth. Here's a man, you feel, who might well have thrown food with the best of them at the Drosses club. The story itself concerns a nephew, a show girl and a prize pig.

Less convincing is Helen Mirren as a plain Yorkshire housewife in *The Hawk* (10.20pm BBC2). David Hayman's otherwise fine *Screen Two*. She is supposed to experience a slow realisation that her husband may be a serial killer, but looks too intelligent for the part.



Wallace and Gromit speed into our hearts

If the idea of Ken Russell's *Treasure Island* (7.30pm C4) has you rushing to join the turkey in the oven, fear not. This is a jaunty reading of Robert Louis Stevenson, complete with a female Long "Jane" Silver.

## BBC1

- 7.30 **BB** The Pink Panther (Blake Edwards 1964 UK). Peter Sellers niftily steals this romantic comedy from beneath the noses of its ostensible stars, David Niven and Capucine, as the bumbling Inspector Clouseau (3/78/182).
- 9.25 **News, Weather** (5/25/95).
- 9.30 **Promises of His Glory** (S) (6/68/0569).
- 10.15 **BB** Oliver! (Carol Reed 1968 UK). Critics hammer on about how Lionel Bart's musical draws Dickens's teeth, forgetting that a Dickens could be sentimental as the next one, and he would probably have thoroughly approved of Reed's lively enriching of Bart's stage musical, with Ron Moody as Fagin, Oliver Reed as Bill Sikes, and Mark Lester as Oliver (1/22/231).
- 12.35 **A Flintstone Family Christmas** (20/57/86).
- 1.00 **News, Weather** (4/85/8908).
- 1.15 **Noel's Christmas Past** (S) (3/10/51).
- 2.15 **EatEnders** (Noel's Christmas) (S) (2/27/24).
- 3.40 **ET** The Extra-Terrestrial (Steven Spielberg 1982 US). Spielberg's entrancing fantasy about a lonely boy (Henry Thomas) who befriends a stranded alien (ET) (2/24/20).
- 5.30 **Antiques Roadshow - the Ned Generation**. The young people's roadshow at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum (S) (5/10/510).
- 6.15 **News, Weather** (8/21/279).
- 6.30 **Local News, Weather** (4/85/786).
- 6.35 **Christmas with Cliff**. Cliff Richard choppers in to a country estate to celebrate Christmas with some Surrey primary-school children (5/42/81).
- 7.15 **Last of the Summer Wine** (3/28/73).
- 8.19 **2001 Children**. Can Ben be rufined by the turkey? (S) (6/98/786).
- 8.45 **P G Wodehouse's Henry Weather**. Peter O'Toole is a touch ectomorphic in build for my idea of Lord Emsworth, the eccentric, pig-loving owner of Blundings Castle, but at least this version does without those perennial casting nightmares, Jeeves and Wooster. It's the usual Wodehouse tale of a young scion of the gentry mixed up with chorus girls and aunts (5/04/2095).
- 10.20 **News, Weather** (1/36/88).
- 10.35 **The Morecambe and Wise Christmas Show** (1975). Gordon Jackson, Diana Rigg and Paul's People were the guests (R) (2/32/1304).
- 11.40 **The First Commandment**. Christmas Live from Lichfield Cathedral, Staffordshire (S) (3/4/873).
- 12.50 **Rear Window** (Alfred Hitchcock 1954 US). Confined to a wheelchair after an accident, news photographer James Stewart begins to spy on his neighbours in Hitchcock's brilliant and self-revealing meditation on voyeurism. Grace Kelly plays Stewart's girlfriend (4/65/94).
- 2.40 **Weather** (5/91/458). To 3.05am.

## BBC2

- 7.30 **Children's BBC: William's Wish Wellingtons**.
- 7.35 **The Foxy Christmas Story**. 7.45 **Spot's Magical Christmas**. 8.10 **Playdays**. 8.30 **87s**.
- 8.45 **Jackson**. 9.10 **The Animals of Farthing Wood**.
- 9.35 **A Santa's Christmas**.
- 10.05 **Blue Peter**.
- 10.30 **Grange Hill**.
- 10.55 **The Queen's Nose**.
- 11.20 **Weekend Break**.
- 11.40 **Star Trek**.
- 12.30 **Football League** (5/02/98).
- 1.00 **Dreaming of Ajax**. Gary Lineker ponders the success of European champions, Ajax FC (R) (S) (5/20/618).
- 1.45 **The O-Zone** (R) (S) (7/89/7618).
- 1.55 **BB** Donovan's Reef (John Ford 1963 US). Ford's underrated comedy - his last twinning with John Wayne - about three American sailors (Wayne, Lee Marvin and Jack Warden) who settle down on a South Sea island at the close of the Second World War (9/76/279).
- 3.40 **The Making of the Trials of Life** (R) (9/40/892).
- 4.30 **Christmas in Vienna** (1995). Plácido Domingo and José Carreras are joined by Natalie Cole for a musical celebration of Christmas (S) (5/23/3).
- 5.30 **Space Predict** (S) (5/42/27).
- 6.15 **Wallace and Gromit in A Close Shave**. Oscar-winning animator Nick Park's latest chancer (S) (3/5/972).
- 6.45 **Ranoch the Red Deer**. Wildlife film about a red deer from the Scottish Highlands (4/89/279).
- 7.35 **Red Rum - a National Treasure** (S) (9/25/60).
- 8.15 **On the Road Again**. Simon Dingle reaches Goa (S) (6/93/628).
- 8.45 **The Mrs Merton Show** Christmas Special. Gary Rhodes, Amanda Barrie and Johnny Briggs of Coronation Street, and Glensy Kinmonth get a genteel ribbing (S) (5/28/297).
- 9.15 **Three Fights: Two Weddings and a Funeral**. Last Christmas's fun and games with the tattered Steve Coogan, in which Pauline Calf thinks she's found Mr Right (R) (S) (5/96/44).
- 9.50 **Bottom** (R) (S) (17/8705).
- 10.20 **Screen Tries: The Hawk**. A serial killer, nicknamed "the Hawk", is preying on women, and a suburban wife, played by Helen Mirren, begins to suspect it's her husband (S) (8/55/453).
- 11.45 **Unplugged** (P. Collins) (S) (3/09/66).
- 12.35 **A Classic Ghost Story - Stalls of Barchester**. Clive Street from *Kept Up Appearances*, Coronation Street's Thelma Barlow, and Robert Hardy star in this MR James ghost story (R) (7/10/96/3).
- 1.20 **BB** La Beata du Diabe (René Clair 1949). Old Michel Simon sells his soul to the devil so that he can be young and handsome enough to seduce Simonetta Valeri, in Clair's witty version of the Faust legend (6/14/63).
- 2.55 **Weatherview** (5/01/835). To 3.05am.

## ITV/London

- 6.00 **GMTV**.
- 6.00 **The Sunday Review**.
- 6.30 **News and Sport**.
- 7.00 **The Sunday Programme** (5/48/09).
- 8.00 **Disney Adventures** (R) (2/45/367).
- 9.25 **Film: Big Foot** (Danny Huston 1987 US).
- 9.45 **The Great Bang** (S) (7/80/6057).
- 8.00 **The Baby-Sitters Club** (9/34/1).
- 8.30 **Where on Earth is Carmen Sandiego?** (S) (7/14/056).
- 10.15 **Link** (S) (7/22/4279).
- 10.30 **This Sunday**, including, at 11.00, **Morning Worship** from Romford Centenary Halls (S) (1/34/34).
- 12.30 **The Elf Who Saved Christmas**. Children's drama (4/77/24).
- 1.00 **News, Weather** (26/75/4057).
- 1.05 **London Today** (7/53/528).
- 1.10 **Hollywood's Greatest Stunts** (6/45/274).
- 2.10 **BB** Disney's the Sword in the Stone (Wolfgang Reitherman 1963 US). Long-neglected Disney version of TH White's novel about the boyhood of King Arthur (8/21/044).
- 3.40 **BB** The Spy Who Loved Me (Lewis Gilbert 1971 US). Curn Jurgens wants to destroy the world, and Roger Moore, if he can stop striking at Barbara Bach, is the only man who can frustrate him (8/25/2028).
- 4.00 **News, Weather** (2/80/40).
- 4.10 **Local News, Weather** (8/83/144).
- 4.15 **Michael Ball**. The boyish singer is joined by Dusty Springfield and Michael Bolton (S) (3/88/057).
- 7.15 **Christmas Heartbeat**. Last Christmas's Heartbeat, to be exact (R) (S) (3/17/569).
- 8.15 **You've Been Framed** (R) (6/16/182).
- 8.45 **Taggart: Flesh and Blood**. Another dust-down repeat from TV, with the late Mark McManus investigating a cache of explosives (R) (5/19/250).
- 10.15 **News, Weather** (12/59/08).
- 10.25 **The Cabaret Family Christmas**, with Cher (5/46/2873).
- 11.55 **This Christmas Eve**. From York, with readings from the Bible, John Betjeman and AA Milne (3/20/601).
- 12.55 **Running Against Time** (Bruce Seth Green 1990 US). A man discovers a time machine and uses it to try to prevent the Kennedy assassination and the Vietnam War (7/10/093).
- 2.40 **BB** Agatha Christie's Dead Man's Folly (Clive Donner 1985 US). Peter Ustinov plays the Belgian sleuth, aided by Constance Cummings and Tim Pigott-Smith (8/19/800).
- 4.25 **BB** The Elm-Chanted Forest (Milan Blazekovic 1986 US). Cartoon fantasy about an artist who can speak to animals (3/03/699). To 5.55am.

## Channel 4

- 6.05 **Blitz!** (R) (G37/204).
- 7.00 **The Herbs** (S) (9/72/4892).
- 7.15 **Lift Off** (R) (S) (2/89/89).
- 7.45 **The Great Bang** (S) (7/80/6057).
- 8.00 **The Baby-Sitters Club** (9/34/1).
- 8.30 **Where on Earth is Carmen Sandiego?** (S) (7/14/056).
- 8.55 **Wise Up** (S) (3/66/1453).
- 9.25 **The Big Breakfast**. Cliff Richard interviewed, while Neil Sedaka sings a carol (6/04/434).
- 10.25 **Saved by the Bell** (2/56/141).
- 10.50 **BB** The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (Michael Curtiz 1960 US). Buster Keaton has a part in this decent version of the Mark Twain classic (8/12/2811).
- 12.50 **Blue Christmas**. Fantasy short about two boys visited by the spirit of Elvis Presley (5/4785/182).
- 1.05 **Little House on the Prairie** (7/75/347).
- 2.00 **BB** Miracle on 34th Street (George Seaton 1947 US). Thoroughly beguiling fantasy in which a New York department store Father Christmas (Edmund Gwenn) claims to be the real Santa Claus (6/67/786).
- 3.45 **BB** The Mousehole Cat. Animation (S) (4/21/9081).
- 4.25 **BB** The Adventures of Mole. Animation based on *The Wind in the Willows* and using the voices of Peter Davison, Richard Briers, Hugh Laue and the late Paul Eddington (S) (5/23/2637).
- 5.30 **Holydays** (S) (5/40).
- 6.00 **The Persuaders!** Brett Sinclair comes round after a boozey night to find that he has a wife (20057).
- 7.00 **First Christmas**. Raymond Briggs's animation (S) (6/3/689).
- 7.30 **Ken Russell's Treasure Island**. Oh, lummie, Ken Russell writes and directs a version of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic tale, with a female Long "Jane" Silver (Hettie Green) (7/69/889).
- 8.45 **BB** Move Over, Darling (Michael Gordon 1963 US). Highly regarded Doris Day comedy in which the clean, all-American Dayna is forced home after five years stranded on a desert island to find her husband, James Garner, has remarried (5/77/434).
- 10.45 **ER**. Repeat Christmas edition of the American medical saga (7/50/2).
- 11.40 **Whose Line Is It Anyway?** (7/99/60).
- 12.10 **BB** Glant Top Ten. Alan Freeman and Tony Blackburn introduce music from the 1970s. Blade, T-Rex, Gary Glitter, Sweet, Mud, Wizard, Suzi Quatro and Alvin Stardust (R) (S) (5/29/094).
- 1.40 **BB** Cavalade (Frank Lloyd 1993 US). Oscar-winning version of Noel Coward's chronicle of an upper-class English couple, their family and their servants from the Boer War to the early 1930s. Stars Diana Wynyard and Clive Brook (6/27/212).
- 3.40 **Rawhide** (9/40/212). To 4.35am.

## ITV/Regions

- ANGlia**
- 6.00am **GMTV** (5/49/69).
- 8.00 **Doney Adventures** (4/23/357).
- 9.25 **Before** (C25/4/24).
- 10.15 **Links** (7/22/259).
- 10.30 **The Sunday Programme** (5/48/09).
- 11.00 **News, Weather** (4/25/291).
- 11.15 **Geordie Games** (S) (6/15/274).
- 12.10 **Films: The World in the Stone** (S) (2/50/142).
- 12.40 **Films: The Spy Who Loved Me** (S) (5/23/284).
- 1.00 **BB** *Geordie Games* (S) (6/15/274).
- 1.15 **Films: The World in the Stone** (S) (2/50/142).
- 1.40 **Films: The Spy Who Loved Me** (S) (5/23/284).
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- 3.45 **Films: The Spy Who Loved Me** (S) (5/23/284).
- 4.00 **News, Weather** (4/25/291

# Saturday Television and Radio

## Film choice

by James Rampton

Dudley Moore is perfectly cast as the Elf who rebels in Jeanne Schwartz's *Santa Claus* (2.05pm BBC1). This silly caper can't help making you yearn for the simple days of Pete and Dud before Moore got seduced by the bright lights of Hollywood.

Brian Glover is a man of many parts. A former professional wrestler, he was the voice behind the Teletubby team and the teacher in *Kids* (Boxing Day C4). He is also a writer, penning Singleton's *Pluck* (7.00pm C4), a quirky drama about a farmer (Ian Holm) who decides to beat a seasonal pluckers' strike by walking his flock of 500 geese the 100 miles to London. This unusual film is directed by Richard Eyre, now head of the Royal National Theatre.



Antonio Banderas blows his own trumpet

Schwarzenegger flexes his pecs as a crack commando up against a ferocious alien enemy in the Latin American jungle.

Antonio Banderas (the star of *Assassins* and currently being groomed by Hollywood as "the new Valentine") and Armand Assante (the baddie in *Judge Dredd*) are two Cuban musicians trying to make it in America after the War in Arne Glimcher's sparkling debut, *The Mambo King* (9.15pm BBC2).

Milos Forman has had many finer moments - *Amadeus*, to name but one - than *Hair* (11.10am BBC2), a terminally dated version of the Broadway musical about an Oklahoman who falls in with the flower-power bunch in Manhattan, a few days before he is supposed to go and fight in Vietnam.

## BBC1

7.25 News, Weather. 8.15-8.59. 7.30 Children's BSC: *The Dwarf Tree*. 7.40 Nick and Novel. 8.05 Eat, the Cat. 8.30 New Adventures of Superman. 9.15 Live and Kickin'. Barbara Windsor takes viewers' calls (although children who only like *Babs* as the terrifying Peggy Mitchell might feel nervous about phoning in). Plus, the more kid-friendly *Ant and Dec, Donna Air, and Daniella Westwood* (8.21-8.55pm).

12.30 News; Weather (8.33-9.45pm). 12.35 Joy to the World. From the Royal Albert Hall, the Christmas show, told in carols, comedy and dance by the likes of Sir Cliff Richard, Sarah Brightman, Patricia Hodge and Stan Phillips. Joy to the world (8.11-9.30pm).

1.35 **Film** Problem Child 2 (Enn Levant 1991 US). Appalling sequel to the erratic original about a put-upon father (John Ritter) adopting a devilish stepdaughter, who causes mayhem and mischief. A terrible example to impressionable children. Send them out carol-singing instead (8.11-9.05pm).

3.05 **Film** Santa Claus - the Movie (Jeanne Schwartz 1984 US). There's more than one dud on the screen as Dudley Moore plays an elf who leaves Santa's North Pole workshop and hots foot it to New York in search of fame and fortune (8.11-9.05pm).

4.50 Final Score (8.55-9.25pm). 5.15 News; Weather (8.32-9.45pm). 5.25 Local News, Weather (8.30-8.32pm). 5.30 Dad's Army (7.17-8.11pm). 6.00 Jim Davidson's Generation Game. Special festive edition, *Joy to the World* (8.11-9.20pm).

7.00 All the Best for Christmas. Niles Yarwood introduces comic Christmas moments from the BBC archives, from Lenny Henry and Tony Hancock, to *To Hell We Do Part* and *One Foot in the Grave*. But they scratched their heads a long time before coming up with the idea (7.11-8.20pm).

8.00 The National Lottery Live (1.48-2.31pm). 8.15 Casualties (8.11-8.25pm). 9.05 News and Sport; Weather (12.55-1.45pm).

9.25 It Might Be You. Comedic starring Douglas Hodge as an electrician whose girlfriend buys him a lottery ticket that scores £25 million - now all they have to do is find it, and pay off his wife (8.11-9.05pm).

10.45 Match of the Day. Newcastle United vs Nottingham Forest and Liverpool vs Arsenal (8.11-9.05pm).

11.50 The Stand Up Show (8.11-8.30pm).

12.20 **Film** Birth of the Beatles (Richard Marquand 1979 US). Risibly biopic of the early days of the Mop tops might be able to pass muster in Kansas, but the flaws are obvious (8.30-9.05pm).

2.00 Weather (8.61-8.79pm). To 2.05am.

REGIONS: NI: 12.20 Wet Wet Wet in Concert. 1.25 Film: Birth of the Beatles.

## BBC2

7.40 **Film** The Gold Rush (Charlie Chaplin 1925 US). Once voted the second-best movie of all time by an international jury (after *Starship Potemkin*).

Charlie Chaplin plays a gold prospector during the Klondike rush in this sweet comedy full of classic images (Chaplin imagined as a chick by the starving Mack Swain; the dance of the bread rolls). Georgia Hale is the object of the little lad's devotion (7.79-8.45pm).

8.50 **Film** The Invisible Man (James Whale 1933 US). Not exactly a role fit for a vain actor, since he is not seen for most of the movie. Claude Rains brought his expressive voice to bear in the part of a scientist made invisible by a drug. The script and special effects are both witty, and directed with the same sense of style that Whale brought to *Frankenstein* (1.17-2.05pm).

10.00 Bollywood '95. Review of the top 20 Indian films of the year (9.48-9.57pm).

11.00 Network East: *Imran Khan... the Untold Story*. Something of an exclusive, if you care about these things, as Jemima Khan talks about her husband's conversion from international cricket to charity work (8.11-8.45pm).

11.50 Sports Review of the Year. Last Sunday's Jamboree (8.11-8.45pm).

1.50 **Film** Gypsy (Mervyn LeRoy 1962 US). Loud, brash version of Julie Styne and Stephen Sondheim's Broadway musical based on the story of stripper Gypsy Rose Lee, with a miscast Natalie Wood as Lee, and Rosalind Russell as her domineering mother (8.56-8.57pm).

4.10 The Oprah Winfrey Show. Joyful, hearty Oprah Winfrey discusses how size and shape affect perceptions of personality (3.15-8.57pm).

4.50 **Film** TOPP (SI) (4.55-4.57pm).

5.35 In Search of Santa (8.71-8.57pm).

6.15 Bollywood or Bust! The final of the Hindi cinema quiz (8.11-8.30pm).

7.00 Coppelia, Sir Peter Wright's production of Delibes's popular ballet performed by the Birmingham Royal Ballet (8.11-8.45pm).

8.40 **Film** The Waste Land. Deborah Warner directs, and Fiona Shaw reads TS Eliot's poem (8.11-8.45pm).

9.15 **Film** The Mambo Kings (Iame Glimdier 1992 US). Lively evocation of post-war America's mambo craze, with Armand Assante and Antonio Banderas as musician brothers who leave Cuba (or New York to seek fame and fortune) (6.18-7.27pm).

10.55 **Film** I Got News for You: The Best of 1995 (R) (8.11-8.45pm).

11.25 Unplugged - Bob Dylan (8.11-8.30pm).

12.10 **Film** Hair (Milos Forman 1979 US). Flaccid version of the famous Sixties "hippie musical" about a Vietnam draft-dodger (John Savage) adopted by Manhattan flower people, poor child (3.09-8.45pm).

2.05 Weatherview (9.52-9.59pm). To 2.15am.

## Television choice

by Gerard Gilbert

*Camelot*, Anthea Turner, newsagents and a sprinkling of families are not the only ones to have benefited from the National Lottery. Writers, it seems, have discovered a whole new sub-genre - the lottery drama.

In *It Might Be You* (9.25pm BBC1), Nigel Williams (*The Wimbledon Pimper*) skips the genre's usual moralising and plays it largely for laughs, with Douglas Hodge's dim, married electrician hitting the jackpot on numbers supplied by his mistress, and then mislaying the ticket. Frances Barber plays his wife, and Amanda Mealing is typecast as the other woman.

**Tx** (8.40pm BBC2) presents Fiona Shaw's critically acclaimed performance of TS Eliot's *The Waste Land*, attempting to reassess what in 1922 was shockingly modern. Shaw is directed by Deborah Warner.

In *Search of Santa* (5.35pm BBC2) should perhaps not have been left within reach of smaller children. As it promises, this is a delve into the origins of Father Christmas - that strange mix of 4th-century saint, Norse god and American merchandising. Saint Nicholas was traditionally nice to kids, once resurrecting three boys cut up and kept in brine by an imkeeper. We don't discover what the imkeeper intended during next.

Culture vultures can tune into ballet - the Birmingham Royal Ballet performing a Sir Peter Wright choreographed version of Delibes's *Coppelia* (7pm BBC2); opera - Carreras, Domingo and Pavarotti together on the eve of the 1990 World Cup Final in *The Three Tenors* (9pm C4); or Bob Dylan, revitalising his back list in *Unplugged - Bob Dylan* (11.25pm BBC2).



Douglas Hodge is on a winning ticket

(7pm BBC2); opera - Carreras, Domingo and Pavarotti together on the eve of the 1990 World Cup Final in *The Three Tenors* (9pm C4); or Bob Dylan, revitalising his back list in *Unplugged - Bob Dylan* (11.25pm BBC2).

## ITV/Regions

**ANGLO**  
As London except 9.25am *Scruffy the Best* (ITV Awards 17.23-17.51). 10.35 *Ant and Dec's Saturday Night Show* (8.55-9.25pm). 1.10 *Super Wednesday* (C4 19.55-20.55). 2.10 *The Scotts' Promenade* (8.21-8.51). 5.20 *New Year's Day* (8.21-8.51). 6.15 *Costume* (8.49-8.58). 1.25am *American Gladiators* (8.58-8.59). 2.20 *The Long Short* (8.58-9.07). 4.20 *British Film Awards* (8.58-8.59). 5.10 *Channel 4* (8.58-8.59).

**THE NORTHERN**  
As London except 9.25am *Scruffy the Best* (ITV Awards 17.23-17.51). 10.35 *Ant and Dec's Saturday Night Show* (8.55-9.25pm). 1.10 *Super Wednesday* (C4 19.55-20.55). 2.10 *Scottish Promenade* (8.21-8.51). 5.20 *New Year's Day* (8.21-8.51). 6.15 *Costume* (8.49-8.58). 1.25am *American Gladiators* (8.58-8.59). 2.20 *The Long Short* (8.58-8.59). 4.20 *British Film Awards* (8.58-8.59). 5.10 *Channel 4* (8.58-8.59).

**CENTRAL**  
As London except 9.25am *Scruffy the Best* (ITV Awards 17.23-17.51). 10.35 *Ant and Dec's Saturday Night Show* (8.55-9.25pm). 1.10 *Super Wednesday* (C4 19.55-20.55). 2.10 *Scottish Promenade* (8.21-8.51). 5.20 *New Year's Day* (8.21-8.51). 6.15 *Costume* (8.49-8.58). 1.25am *American Gladiators* (8.58-8.59). 2.20 *The Long Short* (8.58-8.59). 4.20 *British Film Awards* (8.58-8.59). 5.10 *Channel 4* (8.58-8.59).

**NORTH**  
As London except 9.25am *Scruffy the Best* (ITV Awards 17.23-17.51). 10.35 *Reg's Biggins Thanksgiving* (8.55-9.25pm). 1.10 *Behind the Christmas Counter* (8.58-9.25). 2.20 *Scottish Promenade* (8.21-8.51). 5.20 *New Year's Day* (8.21-8.51). 6.15 *Costume* (8.49-8.58). 1.25am *American Gladiators* (8.58-8.59). 2.20 *The Long Short* (8.58-8.59). 4.20 *British Film Awards* (8.58-8.59). 5.10 *Channel 4* (8.58-8.59).

**WESTCOUNTRY**  
As London except 9.25am *Scruffy the Best* (ITV Awards 17.23-17.51). 10.35 *Reg's Biggins Thanksgiving* (8.55-9.25pm). 1.10 *Behind the Christmas Counter* (8.58-9.25). 2.20 *Scottish Promenade* (8.21-8.51). 5.20 *New Year's Day* (8.21-8.51). 6.15 *Costume* (8.49-8.58). 1.25am *American Gladiators* (8.58-8.59). 2.20 *The Long Short* (8.58-8.59). 4.20 *British Film Awards* (8.58-8.59). 5.10 *Channel 4* (8.58-8.59).

**SCOTLAND**  
As London except 9.25am *Scruffy the Best* (ITV Awards 17.23-17.51). 10.35 *Reg's Biggins Thanksgiving* (8.55-9.25pm). 1.10 *Behind the Christmas Counter* (8.58-9.25). 2.20 *Scottish Promenade* (8.21-8.51). 5.20 *New Year's Day* (8.21-8.51). 6.15 *Costume* (8.49-8.58). 1.25am *American Gladiators* (8.58-8.59). 2.20 *The Long Short* (8.58-8.59). 4.20 *British Film Awards* (8.58-8.59). 5.10 *Channel 4* (8.58-8.59).

**IRELAND**  
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